# My Family and Me

Paul Nation

2025

**Table of contents**

## Introduction

I began writing this history around 2014 after working on my grandmother's (Harriet Ashwell) autobiography. Reading the autobiography made me realise that there are values in recording the past. When I was invited to be the after-dinner speaker at the celebration of Ruapehu College's 60th year, I made that the theme of my talk. I noted how having a recorded family history brought the wider family closer together. I also noted how quickly knowledge and stories of the past are lost as each generation eventually dies out. I am the last of my generation.

Writing this history brought to light letters my mother had written. As I never had any real memories of her, these letters made me realise her love for her children and how she tried to hide and cope with the difficulties she faced with mental illness (depression). Writing this history also got me interested in exploring more about our family tree and this eventually resulted in having my DNA tested and as a result filling significant gaps in my family tree (my father's father, and my grandmother's father) and finding and meeting a lot of kind and welcoming cousins and a sister that I never knew of before.

Our family is particularly fortunate in having a grandmother (Harriet Ashwell) who was interested and very capable in writing about her life (*My Life*), and a nominal great-grandfather (W.C. Nation) who did the same (see Appendix 3). George Skuse carefully collected and photocopied the hand-written account by our grandmother Harriet Ashwell, and was the stimulus for getting it published. We are also lucky to have Unsworth cousins, Edna Bruce and Helen Unsworth, who wrote and edited an account of the Unsworth family. When writing this book, I have not included much information that is already available through these three sources.

I have created a publicly-available family tree on Ancestry and have uploaded many old photographs to that tree. Every photograph I have has been scanned and is available in digital form. The early parts of this history of the Virgo and Munro families involved a lot of difficult research, and I am particularly grateful to my cousins Yvonne Thompson and Martin Garcia (Munro descendants) who helped in this research. Trevor Cobeldick made the breakthrough of finding my father's birth certificate and provided me with helpful advice and encouragement that kept me going.

The family history of course goes back beyond those who emigrated to New Zealand, but in this account, I have largely limited myself to my ancestors in New Zealand.

My great grandmother's brother, Benjamin Beard, when writing a family history for his sister in New Zealand in 1907 marvelled at the age he had lived in.

> "What a wonderful century we began our lives in. Later on telegraphs were brought into use, the starting of steam machinery for agriculture manufactures, mining and shipping. Now the telephone, and flying machines which is to be the wonder of the future some say. Motor cars are beginning to become a nuisance on every road filling

> the air with dust and horrible smell from the petrol they consume, besides running over people."

I feel somewhat the same way, in wonder of our age and yet with a small number of reservations. I am so glad to have lived through the beginning of the computer and internet age, largely keeping up with the changes and experiencing their effects first-hand. Now artificial intelligence is bringing about changes that we are just beginning to understand. My grand-parents' generation were shaped by war. Ours is shaped by technology.

Researching and writing the history prompted me to restore and mark the graves of my ancestors, many of whom are buried in Raethi cemetery. I am grateful to the cousins who supported me in doing this.

Before reading this account, it is worth looking at one of the family trees in Appendix 5 at the end of this book to get some idea of where the various people fit into the family tree.

# Part 1 My Family

## Chapter 1 Lydia Rose Truseler and husbands – immigrants to New Zealand

Lydia Rose Truseler and William Virgo were the parents of my great-grandmother Sarah Ann Virgo (1) who was the mother of Sarah Ann Virgo (2) (Nanny Waring), my father's mother. So, Lydia Rose was my great-great-grandmother on my father's side. She arrived in New Zealand in 1874. Unfortunately, there are no photographs of Lydia or her husbands.

The numbers (1) and (2) are used to distinguish mother and daughter with the same name. Sarah Ann Virgo (1) had twelve children, and Sarah Ann Virgo (2) (Nanny Waring, Paul Nation's grandmother) was her first child.

### Lydia Rose Truseler's life story

| Born on 14 March 1842 in Portslade, Sussex, England | Age |
|---|---|
| Birth of first child Rose Ellen Truseler 10 September 1858 Unknown father | 16 |
| Married William Virgo 9 June 1862 | 20 |
| Birth of daughter Elizabeth Susanna Virgo 25 July 1862 | 20 |
| Birth of daughter Alice Louisa Virgo 3 August 1864 | 22 |
| Birth of daughter Sarah Ann Virgo (1) December 1866 | 24 |
| Birth of son William Thomas Virgo 1 July 1869 | 27 |
| Death of husband William Virgo 31 October 1870 | 28 |
| Married Thomas Tucker 15 May 1872 | 30 |
| Birth of daughter Emily Tucker 7 June 1872 | 30 |
| Emigrated to New Zealand on the *Invererne* 22 November 1873, arrived 8 March 1874 | 31 |
| Birth of daughter Florence Beatrice Tucker 13 September 1876 | 34 |
| Separated from Thomas Tucker around 1877 taking only Florence Beatrice | 34 |
| Death of daughter Elizabeth Susanna 6 November 1882 | 40 |
| Birth of son Joseph Henry Eratu Clark 22 March 1885 | 43 |
| Death of husband Thomas Tucker 4 May 1892 | 50 |
| Married Joseph Clark 28 December 1892 | 50 |
| Died 1 February 1914 in Okato, and buried in Okato cemetery (#1914/1014) | 71 |

Lydia Rose Truseler was born on 14 March 1842 in Portslade in Sussex, England. She was the third child of a family of seven. Her parents were Thomas Truseler and Sarah Waller. In the 1861 census, Lydia and her daughter Rose were living with Lydia's parents. Thomas Truseler and his two oldest boys were described as agricultural labourers, as were others in the same street. Lydia's death certificate described her mother as Mary Truseler formerly Voller (the records say Waller).

On 9 June 1862 at the age of 20, Lydia married William Virgo who was 40 years old. By this time, Lydia already had a three-year-old child, Rose Ellen Truseler (spelt Trusler on the birth certificate), born out of wedlock on 25 July 1858 in the Steyning Union Workhouse in New Shoreham (see https://www.workhouses.org.uk/Steyning/Steyning__jpg).

The 1777 parliamentary report listed twenty parish workhouses in New Shoreham Borough (see https://www.workhouses.org.uk/Steyning/). Rose Ellen's birth printout refers to the Union Workhouse New Shoreham. It is likely the one in Ham Road referred to here - "The Steyning union workhouse built in the 1830s in Ham Road [which is in Shoreham] was enlarged in 1882 by the addition of two large infirmary wings which survived when the original main block was demolished in 1906 and were used over the next 50 years as children's homes under the county council, being themselves demolished in the 1970s." (retrieved on 21 January 2019 from British History Online at https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/sussex/vol6/pt1/pp164-166) (See also https://www.shorehambysea.com/southlands-workhouse-and-hospital/ and, if you scroll down far enough, you will see what is left of the old workhouse).

Three months after the marriage, Elizabeth Susanna Virgo was born. In all, William and Lydia had at least four children together before William's death on the 31st of October 1870, after eight years of marriage. There were two other Virgo children who died young in Portslade (Elizabeth Caroline Virgo died on 10 June 1869 at the age of 16 months, and Elizabeth Sarah Virgo died on 10 June 1868 at the age of two), but we do not know who their parents were. They are not likely to have been the children of William and Lydia.

In the 1871 census, after William's death, Lydia is a pauper living in the Steynham Union Workhouse, employed as a washerwoman with four children – Elizabeth Susanna, Alice Louisa, Sarah Ann, and William Thomas. The children are recorded as scholars, suggesting that the older children may have learned to read.

It is not clear why Rose Ellen was born in the Union Workhouse, as Lydia's parents, Thomas and Sarah, were still alive at that time. They were also both alive when Lydia became a widow in 1870 and then married Thomas Tucker in 1872 and left England with him bound for New Zealand. It is likely that they were very poor themselves and could not support other dependents.

William and Lydia's daughter, Sarah Ann Virgo (1), is the mother of Sarah Ann Virgo (2) who is Nanny Waring, my grandmother. Sarah Ann Virgo (1) is of course my great-grandmother.

**William Virgo**

| Born around 1821 in Portslade, Sussex, England | Age |
|---|---|
| Married Louisa Young in 1847 | 26 |
| Birth of daughter June in 1848 | 27 |
| Death of wife Louisa in 1850 after two years of marriage | 28 |
| Living in Portslade with June and his parents John and Hannah in 1851 | 30 |
| Living with parents in 1861 (No sign of June) | 40 |
| Married Lydia Trusler in 1862 | 41 |
| Birth of daughter Elizabeth Susanna in 1862 | 41 |
| Birth of daughter Alice Louisa in 1864 | 43 |
| Birth of daughter Sarah Ann in 1866 | 47 |
| Birth of son William Thomas in 1869 | 48 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Died on 31 October 1870 in Portslade, Sussex | 50 |

A William Virgo served two weeks in prison in York, Gloucestershire for assaulting a policeman in 1850. In the prison record, he is described as 5'6" in height with dark brown hair, blue eyes, an oval face and sallow complexion. He is also described as of bad character, although he served his two weeks with good behaviour, rather than paying a fine and costs. My best guess is it is not our William because it occurred in York, a long way from Portslade.

There is at least one more William Virgo living in the Brighton area around the same time (Portslade is less than five miles from Brighton). A Sergeant William Virgo served in India with the 7th regiment of Hussars in India in 1858 during the Indian Mutiny and helped relieve the siege of Lucknow. He married Elizabeth Lyall, and they had a son called William (There is an 1855 birth record where the father's occupation is soldier 7th Hussars). Sarah Ann Virgo (1)'s obituary, when she died in Palmerston North, New Zealand in 1934, says that "her father had participated in the quelling of the Indian Mutiny." The problem with this being our William Virgo is that the 1871 census (after our William Virgo died in 1870) shows William Virgo married to Elizabeth with the eldest child William aged sixteen. These facts fit well with William Virgo of the 7th Hussars and Elizabeth Lyall, the birth of whose child William is registered as 1855. There are too many coincidences and contradictions here if our William is William the Hussar who served in India (William, wife Elizabeth, first child William of the right age). The simplest explanation is that there were two William Virgos living in the same area, born roughly around the same time – William the Hussar and our William the agricultural labourer. What links them is the story in Sarah Ann Virgo (1)'s obituary in New Zealand which mentions our William Virgo having served in India. I assume that our William knew of the other William, and to his family, either jokingly or deceptively, spoke of having served in India during the Indian Mutiny, and this continued as a family story, even though our William was never a Hussar and never served in India. I favour this explanation. The alternative is accepting the remarkable coincidences of there being two William Virgo's who both married someone called Elizabeth and both had a child of the same age called William. With the explanation that I favour, our William was not a Hussar, did not marry Elizabeth Lyall and did not have a son called William in York in 1855. I also think our William did not work as a policeman on the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway at Brighton Coaching Station in 1860, but continued living in Portslade.

At Sarah Ann's baptism on 28 April 1867, William's occupation is recorded as a labourer.

On 15 May 1872, a year and a half after William Virgo died, Lydia married Thomas Tucker, a farm labourer (*Invererne* manifest). Lydia's profession is given as needle-woman. Thomas Tucker may have lived in the same workhouse as Lydia, his occupation given as a coke burner. Three weeks after the marriage, their first child Emily Tucker was born. Thomas had four children from a previous marriage to Mary Burtenshaw who died in 1864, but these children were from 9 to 17 years old at the time of the marriage to Lydia and seemed not to be living with their father.

On 22 November 1873, a year and a half after their marriage, Thomas, Lydia, Elizabeth, Alice, Sarah Ann, William, and Emily left on the ship *Invererne*, arriving in Napier, New Zealand, on Sunday 8 March 1874. A journey of 107 days. Sixteen children died during the trip of various infectious diseases including scarlatina (scarlet fever, an airborne infection), bronchitis, and measles (*The Hawke's Bay Times*, No 1557, Napier, Hawke's Bay, Tuesday, 10 March 1874.)

Rose Ellen (Lydia's first child) did not go to New Zealand, but in the *Evening Post* 1891 (19 years later), (Evening Post, 3 January 1891, page 2), and some other New Zealand papers, the following enquiry appeared.

> Thomas and Lydia Tucker went with five children from Brighton to Hawke's Bay, New Zealand, in 1883, and in 1884 resided at Ormondville. Their daughters Eliza and Rose inquire.

Eliza is Thomas's daughter from his previous marriage and Rose is Lydia's daughter.

Thomas and Lydia and the children lived in the Wairarapa near Ormondville and Makotuku, near the railway, although it seems that they may have lived in several places within that area over the years. Thomas's first job may have been working on Brogden's farm at Te Aute. Thomas did labouring work, perhaps involving splitting wood for fencing or firewood. It must have been a hard life with little money and several young children to support.

At some time around 1877, Lydia left Thomas Tucker taking only Florence, their youngest child, with her, and leaving Elizabeth (probably aged 14), Alice (aged 12), Sarah Ann (aged 10), William Thomas (aged 7), and Emily (aged 4). She left to live with Joseph Clark, a farm worker, in Okato. Her relationship with Joseph Clark lasted thirty-seven years, with a two year separation, until she died in 1914. Joseph Clark died in 1919 and was buried next to Lydia in Okato cemetery. Lydia's departure may have been around the time her daughter Alice was pregnant, and that may have been a factor in her departure.

On 20 January 1877, the eldest Virgo child, Elizabeth Susanna married Thomas Dennis McCaffry in Waipawa. Lydia Tucker, her mother, was a witness to the marriage, her address given as Te Aute. Elizabeth Susanna died five years later (6 November 1882) aged 20 from a long illness. Her cause of death was cardiac dropsy for two months and rheumatic fever for seven years. She probably developed rheumatic fever during the voyage to New Zealand eight years before. She is buried in the very small and picturesque Armed Constabulary Cemetery near Opunake in Taranaki, not too far from where Lydia lived with Joseph Clark. There are now only four marked graves in the cemetery, Elizabeth's being one of them.


1.1 Elizabeth Susanna's grave

In 1881 at the time of the assault on Sarah Ann Virgo (1) (see Appendix 1), there were only two of the children living with Thomas Tucker at Te Aute. Sarah Ann aged 14 and Emily aged eight.

Lydia had one child with Joseph Clark, namely Joseph Henry Eratu Clark (Aretuha is another spelling) born on 22 March 1885 (New Zealand Birth index), when Lydia was 43. On Monday 29 July 1889, there is a newspaper report of Tucker vs Clark claiming maintenance for a 4¾ year old (The age fits with their son, Joseph Henry Eratu Clark). By agreement, J. Clark agreed to pay 5 shillings a week until the boy was 14 years old. Both the defendant and plaintiff were living at Okato.

The 1889 case (Tucker vs Clark) for financial support was at a time when Joseph had left Lydia to live with Lucy Porikapa. The other 1889 court case, Clark vs Gray, reported in the Taranaki Herald 16 December 1889 and involving Lucy Porikapa, indicates that Lydia may have had a drinking problem as Joseph Clark states that he left his other woman because "she used to go down and drink at the public house". Lydia's name is not mentioned. There is an 1891 case, Porikapa vs Clark, involving the theft of cattle which states that Clark lived with Lucy Porikapa for two years. The case also states that "she (Lucy Porikapa) had paid five bob a week for Clark's illegitimate child". In the court report, Porikapa says that she got rid of Clark on 24 August 1891, saying "Go. I don't want you to come back. You are no good to me or mine". During the time he lived with Lucy Porikapa, he did work around her farm and received some small payment for this but had no other income.

He seems to have returned to Lydia, because the following year, soon after her previous husband, Thomas Tucker, died on 4 May 1892, Lydia married Joseph Clark. The marriage is recorded in the New Zealand marriage index (#1892/2988). It seems that Lydia's life after leaving Thomas Tucker was not a great improvement either financially or emotionally. Joseph Clark did farm work of various kinds and had very little income.

When he died at the age of 61 in 1892, Thomas Tucker was living alone. His stepson William lived in the same general area and gave him occasional financial support. There is a detailed report of the inquest into his death (see Appendix 2).

There is evidence of Lawrence Sigglekow (Lawrence Nation, Sarah Ann Virgo (2)'s son) registered at a school in Taranaki. This suggests contact between Sarah Ann (2) (Nanny Waring) and her grandmother, Lydia. After the death of Sarah Ann (2)'s first husband (Johann Sigglekow), she may have spent some time with Lydia. Lydia's grandchild, Martin (Buster) Munro, went to school in Tataraimaka in 1911 (and perhaps even earlier) before finishing the year at Central School in New Plymouth. Tataraimaka is 7kms from Okato. There is thus evidence that Lydia remained in some form of contact with her children and grandchildren after leaving Thomas Tucker.

Lydia Clark died on 1 February 1914. She died of cerebral thrombosis and cerebral softening which she had had for two weeks. She is buried in Okato cemetery, and her husband Joseph who died in 1919 was buried with her. Their son, Joseph Eratu Clark, married and eventually died in 1940. He is buried in a soldier's grave in Te Henui cemetery in New Plymouth. There is no record of any children. The reason for Joseph's middle name of Eratu is unknown. The name Eratuha appears as the name of a sales-yard for livestock and as a person's name in the Okato area.

In 2024, Martin Garcia and Paul Nation designed and bought a headstone for Lydia and her husband. The headstone lists Lydia's children and indicates their father where possible.


1.2 Lydia and Joseph's gravestone in Okato cemetery

**Reflections**

There are several spellings of the name Truseler within the family (Trussler, Truseler, Tresler, Trusler). These variant spellings along with the use of X as a signature suggests that poverty and illiteracy went hand-in-hand. Lydia may have been illiterate for much of her life. Her son William Thomas Virgo/Tucker marked his declaration at Thomas Tucker's inquest with an X, as did a witness at Lydia's wedding to Thomas Tucker. There are numerous spellings of her son's name, Eratu.

It looks as if Lydia abandoned most of her family to go off with Joseph Clark in Okato, Taranaki. Her daughter Elizabeth Susanna Virgo married Thomas McCaffry at the beginning of 1877 at the age of 14. She died six years later and is buried about 40 kilometres from where Lydia lived. Okato, where Lydia lived with Joseph Clark, was a military settlement and Elizabeth's husband was probably in the military, although when they were married his profession was given as labourer. It seems likely that Elizabeth and Lydia were in contact with each other in Taranaki.

Joseph Clark gives his occupation as a labourer and a farmer.

Having children outside marriage seemed to be the norm in the family. Lydia had a daughter (Rose Ellen Trusler) before marrying William Virgo, and a son before marrying Joseph Clark. Alice Louisa had her daughter one month after marrying William Reynolds. Sarah Ann Virgo (1) had a child before her marriage to Blackwell, and thereafter dispensed with marriage. Lydia's daughter Florence Beatrice Tucker had twelve of her thirteen children before marrying their father.

**Lydia's children**

*Rose Ellen Truseler*

Born on 10 September 1858, father unknown. Rose Ellen remained in England when Lydia and family left for New Zealand in 1873. She later tried to re-connect with Lydia.

*Elizabeth Susanna Virgo*

1862 – 1882. See above.

*Alice Louisa Virgo*

1864 – 1915. On 14 May 1878, Alice Louisa married William Henry Reynolds. At the time, she was thirteen years old and was eight months pregnant. Her child born on 11 June 1878 was Hannah Louisa Reynolds. William Henry Reynolds was thirty-one years old. DNA evidence indicates that Robert Cock was the father of Alice Louisa's first child, Hannah Louisa. The evidence for this is as follows.

1 The descendants of Robert Cock have DNA links to the descendants of Hannah Louisa Virgo. Hannah Louisa married Francis Thomas Swetman, and the links are thus through the Swetman family. It is thus highly likely that Robert Cock made Alice Louisa pregnant and so was the father of Hannah Louisa.

2 Robert Cock made two Virgo sisters pregnant. First, Alice Lousia in 1877, and Sarah Ann Virgo (1) in 1880 (Sarah Ann Virgo (2) was born on 16 July 1881). Although Robert Cock was the father of Sarah Ann Virgo (2), it is not possible for Alice Louisa and her descendants' DNA links to Robert Cock's descendants to be through Sarah Ann Virgo (2).

3 If this idea is correct, then the descendants of Hannah Louisa will have DNA links to the descendants of Robert Cock and Virgo descendants, but there will be no

links to the descendants of Robert Cock through Alice Louisa's other children of whom William Henry Reynolds is likely to be the father. For links to the descendants of Robert Cock through Hannah Louisa, on Ancestry see Richard Swetman, Leigh Thompson and other Swetman links. For no Cock's links but only Virgo links through Alice Louisa's other children, on Ancestry see Briana Reynolds. The Cock's links through two of Lydia Truseler's daughters (Alice Louisa and Sarah Ann) make it tricky to separate the two paths of the Cock's links through later descendants.

4 There is circumstantial evidence that Robert Cock lived in the same area at the same time as the Virgo/Tucker family and that the two families knew each other well. Thomas Tucker, Lydia's second husband, was a witness on Robert Cock's daughter's (Ann Louisa Cock) death certificate in 1888.

Alice Louisa had four other children with William Henry Reynolds, William Henry Reynolds (2) 1880 – 1943, Elizabeth Reynolds 1884 – 1936, Mary Alice Reynolds 1888 – 1936, and Emily Reynolds 1893 – 1957.

*Sarah Ann Virgo (1)*

1866 – 1934. See Chapter 2 below.

*William Thomas Virgo*

1869 – unknown. Most of what we know about William Thomas comes from the inquest into his step-father's death (see Appendix 2). At the inquest, he used the name William Tucker. He was just one year old when his biological father William Virgo died, and so Thomas Tucker was the only father he knew.

*Emily Tucker*

1872 – 1951. Emily and Florence's father, Thomas Tucker, married Lydia in 1872 and Emily was born three weeks later in Hove, Sussex, England. on 7 June 1872. The following year the family emigrated to New Zealand. Emily married James Peters on 2 September 1892. They had eleven children, one called Lydia Rose after her grandmother. She has a marked grave (Emily Peters) in the Mangatera cemetery in Dannevirke.

*Florence Beatrice Tucker*

1876 – 1944. Florence was born in Te Aute, New Zealand on the 13th of September 1876. She had her first child on 30 January 1891 when she was fifteen. She married George Lemuel (Wasley) Davies on 13 April 1917, by which time she had already had twelve of her thirteen children with him.

*Joseph Henry Eratu Clark*

1885 – 1940. Joseph's father, Joseph Clark, married Lydia in Okato, New Zealand on 28 December 1892. By this time, their son Joseph was seven years old. Joseph (the son) married Martha Charlotte Ernestine Kulling in 1916. She was seven years older than her husband and

they had no children. Joseph served in the first world war and died during the second world war. He is buried in a soldier's grave in New Plymouth, New Zealand. There is an 1885 birth certificate for Joseph Henry Eratu Clark with Joseph and Lydia Rose as parents. His father Joseph Clark was born in England as was Lydia.

1.3 Martha and Joseph Clark

This chapter has covered my ancestors on my grandmother's, Sarah Ann Waring (nee Virgo), side of the family, including her grandmother and grandfather. The following chapter covers my great-grandmother, Sarah Ann Virgo (1), who was the mother of Nanny Waring (Sarah Ann Virgo (2)).

## Chapter 2 Sarah Ann Virgo (1) and partners – my great-grandmother

Sarah Ann Virgo (1), my great-grandmother, seems to have been known as Annie, certainly in later life. She was the mother of my grandmother, Sarah Ann Virgo (2) (Nanny Waring), her first child. Her father was William Virgo who died when she was not quite four years old. She arrived in New Zealand with her mother Lydia Rose and her step-father Thomas Tucker and family in 1874.

### Sarah Ann Virgo (1)

The numbers (1) and (2) are used to distinguish mother and daughter with the same name. Sarah Ann Virgo (1) had twelve children, and Sarah Ann Virgo (2) (Nanny Waring, Paul Nation's grandmother) was her first child.

| Born in Portslade 1 December 1866 to William Virgo and Lydia Rose Trussler | Age |
|---|---|
| Birth of her brother William Thomas in 1869 | 3 |
| Her father William Virgo died in 1870 | 4 |
| Her mother married Thomas Tucker 15 May 1872 | 6 |
| Came to New Zealand on the *Invererne* arriving Sunday 8 March 1874 in Napier | 8 |
| Became pregnant with Sarah Ann Virgo (2) around November 1880 | 14 |
| Assault by David aka Thomas Power 1 January 1881 | 14 |
| Birth of daughter Sarah Ann Virgo (2) 16 July 1881 | 15 |
| Married Thomas Henry Blackwell aged 34 on 30 March 1882 | 16 |
| Left Thomas Blackwell for John Murray Munro (1) in early 1884 | 18 |
| Birth of daughter Annie Munro 31 May 1884 (Blackwell father?) | 18 |
| Birth of son John (Jack) Murray Munro (2) 1886-1964 | 22 |
| Birth of son William (Bill) Robert Munro 1890-1942 | 24 |
| Death of step-father Thomas Tucker 1892 | 26 |
| Birth of son Walter Alexander Munro 1892-1915 | 26 |
| Birth of son Ray David Murray Munro 1895-1957 | 29 |
| Birth of daughter Ruby Kathleen Munro 1897-1967 (married James Brown) | 31 |
| Birth of grandson Lawrence Watty Nusworth Munro (Monro) 1899-1952 | 33 |
| Went to live with Peter Alfred Anderson | ? |
| Birth of daughter Lily Doris Munro 1900-1967 (married Anthony George Thompson) | 34 |
| Birth of daughter Linda Rose Munro 1903-1971 (married Fred George Whiting) | 37 |
| Birth of son Martin Buster Munro 1904-1975 (married Agnes Martindale) | 38 |
| Birth of daughter Myrtle Irene Munro 1905-1976 (married Harold Andrew Learmonth) | 39 |
| Birth of daughter Daisy Margaret Munro 1908-1980 (married Baden Powell) | 42 |
| Husband Peter Alfred Anderson dies 28 April 1917 | 51 |
| Went to live with her daughter Ruby and Jim Brown in Palmerston North in 1920 | 54 |
| Died 4 March 1934 (a will exists in favour of her daughters Ruby, Lilian, Linda, Myrtle, & Daisy) | 67 |
| Buried 5 March 1934 in Kelvin Grove Cemetery in Palmerston North | 67 |

2.1 The two Sarah Ann Virgos

The above picture (2.1) may be a picture of Sarah Ann Virgo (1) (on the left). Sarah Ann Virgo (2), her first child, (Sarah Ann Nation at the time of the photo) is on the right. The person in the middle may be Linda Whiting, another child of Sarah Ann Virgo (1).

Sarah Ann Virgo (1), my great-grandmother, was born in Portslade near Brighton, Sussex on 1 December 1866. Her marriage certificate to Thomas Henry Blackwell gives her age and gives her parents as William Virgo and Lydia Rose Trussler. Her father William Virgo died in 1870 when Sarah Ann Virgo (1) was almost 4 years old and Lydia, Elizabeth, Alice, Sarah and Thomas ended up in the Steyning Union Workhouse in Portslade, Sussex, listed as paupers, according to the 1871 census data. Lydia's occupation is given as a washerwoman. Lydia married Thomas Tucker in May 1872. On Sunday 8 March 1874 at the age of 8, having left England 107 days previously in November 1973, Sarah Ann Virgo arrived on the ship *Invererne* with her mother Lydia Rose Virgo nee Trussler, Elizabeth (12), Alice (8), a 4 year old brother William Thomas Virgo, and a 1 year old half-sister Emily Tucker, along with Lydia Rose's 2nd husband, Thomas Tucker (42 years old), a coke burner according to the 1871 census. Note that Sarah Ann's age (8) does not agree with ship's records which list her as 6 years old.

In October 1880, Robert Cock, a family friend, made her pregnant. On 1st January 1881, when she was 14 years old and around two months pregnant, she may have been raped by David aka Thomas Power, but Power was found not guilty (see Appendix 1). Her first child, Sarah Ann Virgo (2) my grandmother Nanny Waring, was born in Ormondville on 16 July 1881, six and a half months after the possible assault by David Power. From the substantial newspaper report of the assault in the Hawkes Bay Herald, 6th January 1881, we learn that Sarah Ann Virgo (1) lived with her step-father, Thomas Tucker who was a labourer, her 11 year old brother (William Thomas Virgo) and Thomas Tucker's child Emily, aged 8 at the time. It was reported that her mother had left home (she had presumably abandoned them). They lived around one and a half miles from Te Aute and a half a mile from the nearest neighbour. There was a railway station not far from the house. None of the children attended

any school. The hotel keeper at Pakipaki testified that the Tucker family had a bad reputation. After a five minute deliberation, the jury returned a verdict of David Power being not guilty, largely it seems because of inconsistencies in 8 year old Emily Tucker's evidence. The implication of the verdict seems to be that David Power was led on by Sarah Ann Virgo (1).

There are several points of evidence that Robert Cock (Cocks, Cox, Cook) (1846-1935) was the father of Sarah Ann Virgo (2) (Nanny Waring), the mother being Sarah Ann Virgo (1). Robert Cock was 32 years old when Sarah Ann Virgo (1) was fourteen, and became pregnant with Sarah Ann Virgo (2). Robert is connected to several surnames for a variety of reasons. Robert Cock (1851, 1861, 1871 England census mis-transcribed as Cook), England & Wales marriage register; Robert Cox on the 1887 & 1896 New Zealand Electoral Rolls; Robert Cocks in the New Zealand death index; Robert Cook on Elizabeth Lavinia's birth certificate.

The evidence for Robert Cock being the father of Sarah Ann Virgo (2) (Nanny Waring) is as follows. The names below in square brackets are Ancestry.com members that have DNA links to Paul Nation.

1 Robert Cock and Ann Welsh had six children (John Henry (unmarried?), Elizabeth Lavinia (married CRL Mitchell DNA links), Ann Louisa (died aged 11), James Henry (unmarried), George Henry (DNA link), Robert (married)). There are DNA connections from Paul Nation back to Robert Cock through two of his children, his daughter Elizabeth Lavinia [see below], and his son George Henry [KN Perry]. There may be other connections to find through John Henry, and Robert. The DNA links are supported by family trees on Ancestry.com that connect Robert Cock and his children to people who have DNA links to Paul Nation.

2 Robert Cock's daughter Elizabeth Lavinia Cock married CRL Mitchell, and thus Elizabeth Lavinia's descendants have DNA connections to Paul Nation. CRL Mitchell and Elizabeth Lavinia had 11 children, and Paul Nation has DNA links to at least four of them (Ethel Pearl Raxworthy [Sarah Jane Brown], Annie Elizabeth Sherborne [Lynda Frater, Bruce Sherborne], Mary Emma Woodward [nettybt]), and William Leonard Mitchell [Jane Furner]. Four of CRL Michell's 11 children died young (Charles William, Elizabeth, Elsie May, George). As yet, no links have been found to Dorothy Edith, Charles Frederick, and Frederick Arthur (who had one son).

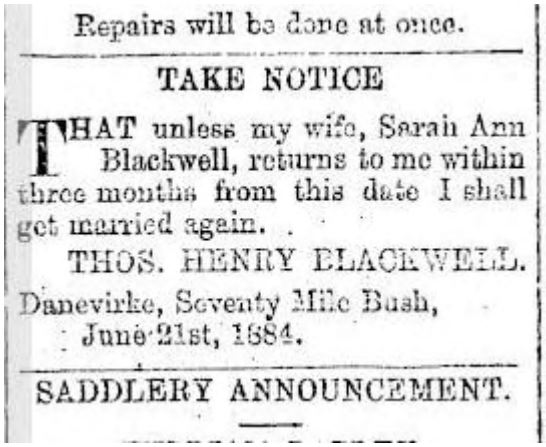
3 Three years earlier, Robert Cock had made Sarah Ann's older sister, Alice Louisa Virgo, pregnant when Alice Louisa was thirteen years old.

4 Robert Cock was living in the same area as Sarah Ann Virgo (1). His children are registered as being born in Napier, Waipawa (1879), Tamaki (1881), Kopua, Norsewood, and Ormondville, which are all near each other and near the Tucker/Virgo family. Waipawa was the location of the nearest registration office. Robert Cock seems to have lived in Makotuku (Elect Reg 1896). On Cock's daughter, Ann Louisa's, death certificate, Thomas Tucker (Sarah Ann Virgo (1)'s

stepfather) is listed as being present at her death. The Cock and Virgo/Tucker families were clearly well known to each other. Ann Louisa died several years after Sarah Ann Virgo (2) was born and the two families were still in contact with each other, so it is likely that Alice Louisa Virgo and Sarah Ann Virgo (1) had not revealed the father of their children.

5 Robert Cock had six siblings (Jane, George, James, Mary Elizabeth, Thomas H., and Richard). There may be DNA links to their descendants that are yet to be found.

When Sarah Ann Virgo (1) was 16 years old in 1882 she married Thomas Henry Blackwell who was 24 years old (The marriage was registered #1882/573). Her child, Sarah Ann Virgo (2), my grandmother Nanny Waring, was 8 months old then. She left Blackwell two years later, and he posted the following notice in the Feilding Star on 21 June 1884:



Repairs will be done at once.

TAKE NOTICE

THAT unless my wife, Sarah Ann Blackwell, returns to me within three months from this date I shall get married again.

THOS. HENRY BLACKWELL.

Danevirke, Seventy Mile Bush,
June 21st, 1884.

SADDLERY ANNOUNCEMENT.

2.2 Blackwell separation from Sarah Ann Virgo (1)

She probably left him for John Murray Munro from Sutherlandshire in Scotland. From then on, Sarah Ann Virgo (1) seems to have abandoned the names Virgo and Blackwell and gone solely by the name Annie Munro. When Paul Nation's father (her grandchild) was born, in 1899, he was registered as Lawrence Wattie Nusworth Monro (sic), even though John Murray Munro was not his biological grandfather. Her daughter, Annie Munro (b. 1884), may have had Thomas Henry Blackwell as her father. Sarah Ann Munro (1) had four sons and two daughters after joining with John Murray Munro, namely Annie Munro (1884-1917), John (Jack) Murray Munro (b. 1886); William (Bill) Robert Munro (b. 1890); Walter Alexander Munro (b. 1892 and died at Gallipoli); Ray David Munro (b. 1895) and possibly Ruby Kathleen Munro (b. 1897). Among these children, Annie Munro, Sarah Ann (2)'s second child, is a bit of a mystery. There is no record of her marriage or death. There is a birth certificate for Annie Munro (1884-1917) (Reg. # 1884/4434) with Sarah Ann Munro as the mother and John Marray (sic) Munro as the father. The death record for Annie Munro in 1917 gives her age as 39 years old. There are no other Annie Munro death records before 1936 which come closer to her age. Her birth certificate notes the child as being present at the birth registration, and being born in Upper Taonui.

John Murray Munro (1) may have been an alcoholic who later abandoned his family, according to a Thompson family story. DNA evidence shows that the five younger Munro children, from Lilian on, are not John Murray Munro's children but are the children of Peter Alfred Anderson. Ruby Kathleen Munro was born in Levin, but her birth was registered in Shannon (W. C. Nation registrar), near Levin, and she may also be Peter Anderson's daughter, but there is no way of checking as her only surviving child, Colin Brown, was adopted.

| Child | Date of birth | Place of birth or registration |
|---|---|---|
| Sarah Ann Virgo (2) | 6 Jul 1881 | Ormondville |
| | | |
| Annie Munro | 31 May 1884 | Upper Taonui |
| John (Jack) Murray Munro | 9 Nov 1886 | Taonui |
| William (Bill) Robert Munro | 1 May 1890 | Bunnythorpe |
| Walter Alexander Munro | 9 Aug 1892 | Taonui, Feilding |
| | | |
| Ray David Murray Munro | 14 Feb 1894 | Levin |
| Ruby Kathleen Munro | 4 Nov 1897 | Shannon |
| Lilian Doris Munro | 5 Nov 1900 | Levin |
| Linda Rose Munro | 18 Mar 1903 | Shannon |
| Martin (Buster) Munro | 2 Sep 1904 | Wellington |
| Myrtle Irene Munro | 14 Oct 1905 | Palmerston North |
| Daisy Margaret Munro | 6 Apr 1908 | Unknown |

2.3 Sarah Ann Virgo (1)'s children with date and place of birth

Sarah Ann Virgo (1) may have lived in the Ormondville area until around 1883, then the Taonui Feilding area with John Murray Munro until around 1893, then the Levin Shannon area and Woodville with Peter Anderson until 1920, and finally in Palmerston North with her daughter Ruby's family until her death in 1934.

Sarah Ann Virgo (1)'s step-father, Thomas Tucker, died in 1892 when Sarah Ann was living with John Murray Munro. He is reported to have drowned in a ditch under the influence of drink while going home one night on the Makotuku-Norsewood Road. There is a detailed hand-written account of the inquest, and the inquest is reported in the *Bush Advocate* of 7 May 1892 (see Appendix 2). It seems that he probably died from a heart attack.

The 1896 Electoral roll shows Sarah Ann Munro (1) living in Upper Taonui (Domestic duties) and John M. Munro living in Taonui. Taonui Road begins halfway between Feilding and Bunnythorpe about 5 kilometres from Feilding. William Robert Munro put Feilding as his birthplace (1888) on his army attestation form. Walter Alexander Munro's birth (1891) was registered in Feilding. Ray David Murray Munro (1894) was born in Levin according to his 1916 army attestation form, and his residence was given as care of (his brother?) J. Munro in Levin.

Sarah Ann Virgo (2)'s only child, Lawrence Watty Nusworth Munro, was born in Levin in December 1899 suggesting that Sarah Ann Virgo (2) (Nanny Waring) may have been living at home when she became pregnant.

The birthplaces of the Anderson children with his first wife Ane Larson and the Munro/Anderson children show that Peter Alfred Anderson was living in the wider Levin area before and after joining up with Sarah Ann Munro (1). Sarah Ann Munro (1) and Peter Anderson moved to Woodville probably around 1914-1915 as evidenced by the Army Reserve roll addresses of William Robert Munro and Ray David Munro, jointly sub-leasing a piece of land there in 1916.

Peter Alfred Anderson was born in 1852 in Sweden, so he was 14 years older than her. Her son, William Robert Munro, gave Pinfold Road, Woodville as his address on the 1914-1915 and 1916-1917 Army Reserve Rolls and his occupation as farm labourer, and her son Ray David Murray Munro gave the same address on the 1914-1915 Army Reserve Roll. Peter Anderson already had eight children with his wife, Ana Marie Larsen, the last of these born in 1896. DNA evidence indicates that Lily Doris Munro (born 1900) and the subsequent Munro children (Linda, Martin, Myrtle, Daisy) were his children. Ruby (born 1897) may also have been his daughter. The Munro children used the family name Anderson for a while according to school records and newspaper reports of Daisy's accident. When Sarah Ann Munro (1) joined with Peter Anderson, let us say in 1897, she had around seven children aged from recently born or about to be born (Ruby) to 16 years old (Sarah Ann, my grandmother Nanny Waring).

2.4 Sarah Ann Munro (1) in the middle (probably in Woodville)

In the Hastings Standard 10 June 1916, there is a report of the transfer of a piece of sub-leased land of over 54 acres from W. H. Oldridge to P. Anderson and Annie Munro, being Section 14 of the Woodville Survey Area. In the Hastings Standard 10 February 1917, there is a notice certifying the transfer of the same piece of land from Peter Anderson to Annie Munro (Section 14 at Woodville). Peter Anderson died just over two months later (28 April 1917) and this may have been his way of providing for her. Their piece of land may have been on the corner of Pinfold Road and Napier Road (now State Highway 2). When Peter Anderson died, the youngest of Sarah Anne's children with him, Daisy, was 9 years old.

There is a 1919 Woodville Examiner report of Daisy Anderson, described as a little girl and daughter of Mrs P. Anderson of Napier Road, Woodville being involved in an accident. Daisy would be 11 years old then. There is also another report of the same accident in the Manawatu Times 5 December 1919, where she is called Daisy Munro.

There is a 21 April 1920 Woodville Examiner report of Ruby and Jim Brown's wedding in Woodville, hosted by Mrs Munro with Lilian (bridesmaid), Ruby's brother John (of Levin) (giving the bride away), Daisy (flower-girl), and Anthony Thompson (best-man) in attendance.

Sarah Ann Munro (1) was living with Jim and Ruby Brown as Annie Munro at 13 Willis Street, Palmerston North from 1920 until her death in 1934 (1934 obituary and 1923, 1926, 1928 Electoral rolls and City Directory). In the city directory Mrs Annie Munro is listed as the resident of 13 Willis Street, Palmerston North. This may be because she was the oldest in the family or because she may have helped in buying the house.

Sarah Ann Virgo (1)'s death certificate seems largely a work of fiction regarding her age and her parents. On John (Jack) Murray Munro (2)'s birth certificate, Sarah Ann Virgo (1)'s age is given as 26 (She was more likely 24) and her marriage to John Murray Munro is given as 2 December 1890, although her marriage is probably non-existent.

Sarah Ann Virgo (1) died on 4 March 1934 aged 67 and is buried in Terrace End Cemetery in Palmerston North (Area B, Row 48). The cemetery records say 3 March but the execution of her death registration, her will and gravestone say 4 March 1934 and are more likely to be accurate. The cause of death was hypostatic pneumonia, hemiplegia, and auricular fibrillation.


2.5 Sarah Ann Munro's original grave in Terrace End cemetery in Palmerston North

Her granddaughter Betty Kathleen Brown was buried in the same grave eight and a half years later. It seems likely that the old gravestone was replaced by the current one after Betty Kathleen died from polio (infantile paralysis) at the age of 21 in 1942. The grandmother and granddaughter may have been close to each other, as Sarah Ann Virgo (1) was living with her daughter Ruby Kathleen Brown at 13 Willis Street, Palmerston North at the time of Betty Kathleen's birth in 1921 until the time Sarah Ann died. Ruby's husband, Jim, was the executor of her will. Her will leaves her property in equal shares to her daughters Ruby, Lilian, Linda, Myrtle and Daisy.


2.6 Sarah Ann and Betty's grave replacing the original

In her obituary published in 1934, she is called Mrs J. Munro. The J may be from John Murray Munro. The obituary suggests she led an active life in Palmerston North and was well regarded in the community.

## MRS J. MUNRO.

Mrs J. Munro, whose death occurred on the 4th inst., came to New Zealand as a child two or three years old, and in her earlier days experienced many of the exciting times which fell to the lot of pioneering families. Her father had participated in the quelling of the Indian Mutiny and on his return to England he lived at Hove, where the deceased lady was born. On arrival in the Dominion the new colonists settled in Hawke's Bay and it was only 14 years ago that Mrs Munro, who had lost her husband some years previously, came to Palmerston North to reside with her daughter, Mrs R. Brown, of Willis Street.

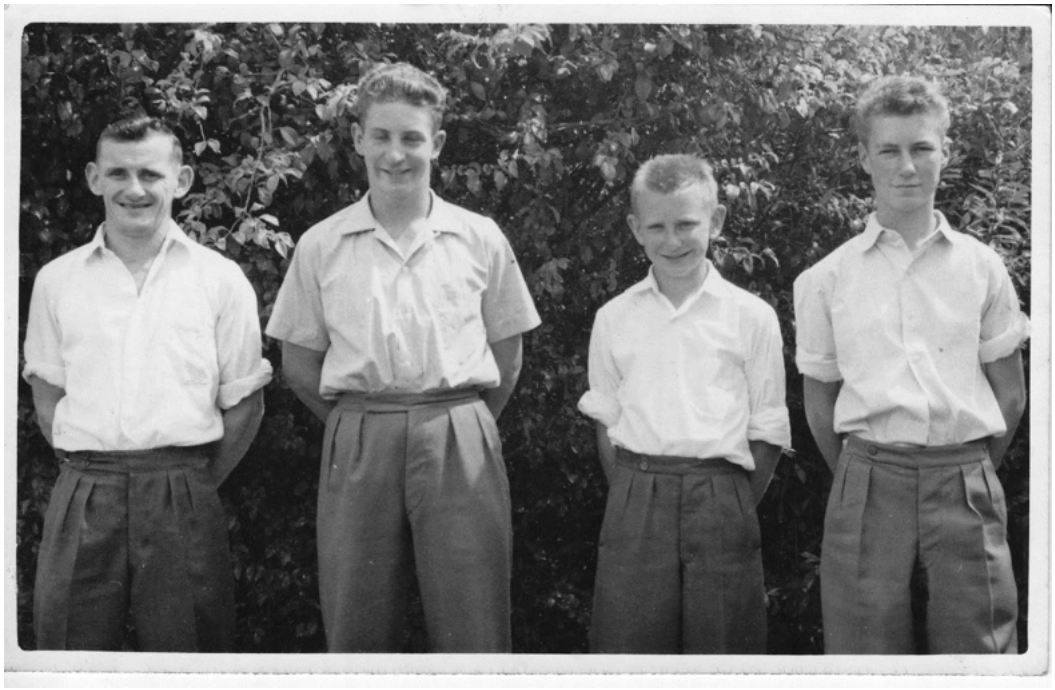
Some six months ago the deceased lady's health necessitated her being admitted to hospital, where she remained for five months. Unfortunately, on her return to her home another bad turn necessitated Mrs Munro's re-admission, death intervening the following day in her 67th year. A lover of horticulture, she was a member of the Palmerston North Horticultural Society and of the Manawatu A. and P. Association, and by her death the community has lost a member who took an active interest in charitable and other works. Of a family of 10 members eight survive their mother, Mesdames F. Whiting, B. Powell and R. Brown, of Palmerston North, being daughters. One son Walter, made the supreme sacrifice on Gallipoli as a member of the Otago Regiment.

The remains were laid to rest in the Palmerston North cemetery, when Very Rev. Monsignor MacManus conducted the service.

2.7 Sarah Ann Munro (1) obituary

The Munro sisters got together in December 1959 at my grandmother's place in Raetihi for Bill and Sarah Waring's 30th wedding anniversary. The following photos are from that reunion.


2.8 The Munro sisters at the wedding anniversary in Raetihi



2.9 John Nation (son of Lawrence), Walter Powell (son of Daisy), Paul Nation (son of Lawrence), and Colin Brown (adopted son of Ruby) at the wedding anniversary

**Robert Cock**

My great-grandfather was Robert Cock. He was already married when he made my great-grandmother pregnant, and three years previously, he had made her elder sister pregnant.

Robert Cock was born in 1848 in St. Mawes, a village within the civil parish of St. Just in Roseland, Cornwall, England. He had two sisters and four brothers. He was the fourth child of George Ennis Cock and Lavinia Fowler. On 28th November 1869, he married Ann Welsh. In 1875 (calculated from his death certificate), Robert and Ann and probably their first son, John Henry, came to New Zealand. The rest of their six children were born in New Zealand. I have not yet been able to trace a marriage or death certificate for John Henry. Robert had two illegitimate unacknowledged children with two sisters, Alice Louisa Virgo and Sarah Ann Virgo (1). The children were Hannah Louisa Reynolds and Sarah Ann Virgo (2) my grandmother. The Cock family lived in the Kopua, Ormondville, Makotuku area, not far from the Virgo/Tucker family. Robert Cock's wife Ann died in 1912 aged 69, and five years later in 1917 he married Sarah Maria Wyley. It was her third marriage. She was 60 and he was 71. Robert died on 4 August 1959 at the age of 89. He is buried in Camberley cemetery in Hastings (Block D Plot 885). The grave originally had a headstone with the inscription. "Dearly loved husband of Sarah Maria Cocks." His son James Henry Cock is in same plot. With the help of Martin Garcia, I tracked down the grave which has a small tree stump in it and no headstone. I have now had a flat tablet marker placed on the grave. Details of its location can be found on Ancestry.com.


2.10 Marker on Robert Cock's grave installed 2025

I thought long and hard about the marker on Robert Cock's grave. He had behaved very badly but he was my great-grandfather. It took me three visits to the cemetery over two days

to find the grave so  decided it would be good to mark it. I could not think of a suitable inscription that would indicate his partners and children. I finally decided to play it safe and copy the inscription that was on the original headstone as in the cemetery records and add the name and dates of his son who is in the same grave.

## Chapter 3 Sarah Ann Virgo (2) Nanny Waring – my grandmother

We have now looked at my ancestors on my father's side of the family who came to New Zealand from England. This chapter is about my grandmother, born in New Zealand, who was the granddaughter of Lydia Truseler, and the daughter of Sarah Ann Munro (1).

I have strong and very fond memories of my grandmother, Nanny Waring. She died when I was twenty. My earliest memory related to her was when my father and I were going to see her in our car and just outside of Ohakune we saw a nanny-goat. Ever diplomatic, I said to my father, "We won't tell Nanny, will we?". My father used to let me sit on his lap and steer the car. For a special treat, he would drive off the main road and go up past the turn-off across the railway line, just before the final straight to Raetihi. With the railway gone, that little hill no longer exists.

### My grandmother (my father's mother) and grandfathers

| Sarah Ann Virgo* (Munro) born 16 July 1881 | Age |
|---|---|
| Birth of her only child Lawrence Watty (spelled Wattie on the birth certificate) Nusworth Monro (sic) born 12 December 1899 | 18 |
| Married Johan Ludwig Christian Siggelkow 5 November 1900 | 19 |
| Johan died at the age of 86 on 7 March 1909, and was buried in the Mako Mako Road cemetery, Levin | 29 |
| Married Charles Cecil Nation 1 June 1913 | 32 |
| Birth of Violet Pearl Nation 20 January 1920 (adopted) | 39 |
| Charles Cecil Nation died 28 November 1928 | 48 |
| Married William Stephen Waring 12 December 1929 (marriage certificate) | 49 |
| Her son Lawrence Watty Nation died 14 March 1952 | 71 |
| Died 9 June 1964, and was buried in Raetihi Cemetery | 84 |
| William Stephen Waring died 1969 (born 10 June 1895) and is buried in Raetihi Cemetery in the RSA section | |
| Violet Pearl (–>Ann Stephana Waring –> Ann Harris-Thompson) died 29 December 2006 in Turramurra, Sydney | |

*Virgo on her birth certificate.

Because my grandmother and great-grandmother had exactly the same maiden name, Sarah Ann Virgo, I will use Nanny Waring to refer to her in this and other chapters. She was known to us as Nanny Waring, because her previous husband Charles Nation had died before her grandchildren were born, and by then she had married William Waring (Uncle Bill).

I found out in later life that, strictly speaking, our family name was not really Nation. None of my family spoke about these things. Nanny Waring's first husband was a man much older than her (75 years old), called Johan Ludwig Christian Siggelkow, whose first wife (Friderika Louisa Henrietta Wendleborn) had died on 4 March 1900. There are various spellings of Siggelkow (Sigglekow Siggelgow) and Johan (Johann). They were married on 5 November

1900 (a marriage registration exists), just less than a year after my father was born on 12 December 1899 (a birth registration exists with the name Lawrence Wattie Nusworth Monro. The mis-spelling of Monro (should be Munro) made the certificate hard to find). The marriage was probably arranged for Johan's convenience, and Nanny's respectability. He had been married to his first wife for 50 years, and the same year his wife died, he married Sarah. An interesting side note is that the Registrar on the marriage certificate is W. C. Nation, and a witness is Chas. C. Nation whom she married 13 years later. My sister Betty had some story of Nanny Waring being known as the 5 pound bride, indicating she had been sold into marriage. When I asked Betty where she got the story from, she could not recall.

Both my father and grandmother Nanny Waring were born out of wedlock, and it seems unlikely that Nanny Waring and my father knew who their fathers were. When I had my DNA tested through Ancestry.com, within two days with the kind and generous help of Les Unsworth (my fourth cousin) and Sharon Tunbridge (my second cousin), I discovered who my father's father was; a secret my grandmother never revealed, perhaps not even to my father.

**Walter Nowell Unsworth**

My biological grandfather was Walter Nowell Unsworth (sixth child of thirteen of John Barnes Unsworth, 1846-1908 and Eliza Fisher) who lived from 1876-1952. Walter Nowell married Betty (Bessie) Windelev (1881-1934) in Levin on 18 September 1899 when he was 23 years old. Two months later, his first child, John (Jack) Barnes Unsworth, was born on 20 November 1899 in Levin (Jack died in Northland on 18 April 1976), and my father was born less than a month after Jack. Walter Unsworth's granddaughter, Edna Bruce who wrote her family's history, told me it was a shotgun wedding – marry my daughter or else. He got Bessie pregnant about a month before he got my grandmother, Nanny Waring pregnant. My grandmother did not have a father with a shotgun, and in addition she was second in line by a month.

3.1 Walter Nowell Unsworth

There are four kinds of evidence showing that Walter Nowell Unsworth is my grandfather.

1 My father's birth certificate lists Nusworth as one of his second names. This is probably a mis-spelling, mis-hearing or mis-copying of Unsworth, or a deliberate attempt by my grandmother to reveal but not reveal. My father did not use that given name during his lifetime, and he may not have even known of it. Watty Nusworth in my father's name parallels his father's name, Walter Unsworth.
2 The DNA evidence shows I have well over a hundred DNA connections with Unsworth descendants, the closest being Helen Unsworth (granddaughter of Walter Nowell), and Sharon Tunbridge (great-granddaughter of Walter Nowell).
3 Walter Nowell Unsworth was in Levin where my grandmother lived in 1899, the year my father was conceived and born.
4 Edna Bruce, Walter Knowell's granddaughter said the family knew of the shotgun wedding and of another woman's pregnancy.

Walter Nowell Unsworth was born on 25 June 1876 at Nowell Cottage in Upper Hutt and died on 31 March 1952. His death was registered in 1952 in Rotorua. He was listed in the 1916-1917 World War 1 reserve roll as living in 4 Princep St., Grey Lynn, occupation farmer. He is registered in the 1949 electoral roll as living at 156 Ranolf St., Rotorua, occupation farmer, along with Magdalene Unsworth (nee Davies) who he married in 1936, two years after his first wife died. Edna Bruce's history of the Unsworth family provides a very readable, useful account of Walter's life, and the lives of his ancestors and children. When he died, in the same year my father (his son) died, I was eight years old.

My grandmother, Nanny Waring (Sarah Ann Virgo 2), was born on 16 July 1881 at Ormondville, so she was 18 when my father was born. Her name on her birth certificate was Sarah Ann Virgo, her mother's maiden name. The newspaper reports of the assault on her mother (also named Sarah Ann Virgo) by Thomas (alias David) Power on 1 January 1981 show that her mother must have already been pregnant with my grandmother at the time of the alleged assault. There are newspaper reports of the trial (see Appendix 1) where Power was found not guilty. DNA evidence shows that Nanny Waring's father was Robert Cock, a family friend who three years previously had made her older sister pregnant.

In the newspaper report of my parents' wedding (see Chapter 5), there are Munros listed as attending, including Mrs Munro who was likely to be Sarah Ann Virgo (1), my great grandmother, who was still alive then. Family photographs show that Nanny Waring maintained her connections with her half-sisters and half-brothers throughout her life.

**Johan Siggelkow**

3.2 Lawrence, Johann Siggelkow, and Sarah Ann (Virgo/Munro 2) Siggelkow

3.2 is a photo of my father, then Lawrence Watty Siggelkow, Johan Siggelkow and my grandmother. There is a history of the Siggelkow family available through the National Library of New Zealand, and the photo of my father, Johann and my grandmother Sarah is in that book. In the Siggelkow book, my father's name is incorrectly given as Walter. The photo is the earliest photo that I have of Nanny Waring. In the photo, I see the gaps between them, but they look happy. The marriage to Johann Siggelkow gave some respectability to my grandmother and provided a stable home for my father.

Johan Siggelkow's grave is in the old Levin cemetery on the corner of Mako Mako and Tiro Tiro Roads, along with the grave of his previous wife. This cemetery also has the graves of W. C. Nation and his wife, who were the parents of my grandmother's second husband Charles Cecil Nation, who she married (1 June 1913) four years after her first husband died (Appendix 3).

**Charles Cecil Nation**

Charles Cecil Nation was my grandmother's second husband. He had previously been married to Isabella Grace Prouse.

| Charles Cecil Nation | Age |
|---|---|
| Born 24 September 1873 | |
| Married Isabella Grace Prouse 22 April 1902 | 28 |
| Divorced 19 March 1912 | 38 |
| Christabel Grace Amori Nation born 13 December 1912 | 39 |
| Married Sarah Ann Siggelkow 1 June 1913 | 39 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Violet Pearl Nation 20 January 1920 (adopted)<br>Died 28 November 1928, buried in Raetihi Cemetery<br><br>His father W.C. Nation died 29 May 1930 | 46<br>55 |

In theory, C. C. Nation and Grace had a daughter, but it seems unlikely that Christabel was C. C.'s daughter given the date of the divorce, the lack of children during the previous ten years of marriage, and the lack of subsequent children. Christabel married John Edward Tunnington on 14 April 1959. They had no children. Christabel died on 15 November 1988 and has left an archive (89-362) in the National Library of New Zealand largely about her research on churches in England. Folder 12 in the archive has copies of Nation data and Folder 4 has letters linking Nation, Webley and Prouse. (See http://www.qwerty.geek.nz/GraceProuse/ for data on Grace Prouse, the Prouse/Nation divorce, and Christabel Nation).


3.3 Charles C. Nation and Sarah Nation (Nanny Waring)

My father who was 13 years old at the time of the marriage changed his name from Lawrence Watty Siggelkow to Lawrence Watty Nation. The spelling of Lawrence with a "w" is the correct spelling, because that spelling is used in the newspapers he published, such as *The Ohakune Times*, and is in various legal documents such as C. C. Nation's will. My grandmother was C. C. Nation's second wife, his first was Isabella Grace Prouse who divorced him, and the divorce documents which are publicly available show the divorce was rather messy. There are different accounts of where the fault lay (see for example the account in W. C. Nation's reminiscences in Appendix 3) but the divorce documents place the blame firmly on C. C. Nation. C. C. and Grace had moved to Ohakune where C. C. worked in a printing business, most likely because of the collapse of his father's printing business in Levin referred to in W. C Nation's reminiscences. They probably lived in the house at 34 Miro Street, Ohakune, that later Ralph George (who worked in my father's bakehouse, Thomas Bakery, in Ohakune) and family lived in. The house is still there with little change.

After the divorce, Charles continued to live there, taking over the printing business when World War 1 began. There is a photograph of a woman in front of the house in Miro Street, but it is not clear if it is C. C.'s first wife Grace, or my grandmother, Sarah.

C. C. must have been relatively well off as he owned a car and was able to buy or build a house in Ohakune and then another in Raetihi.

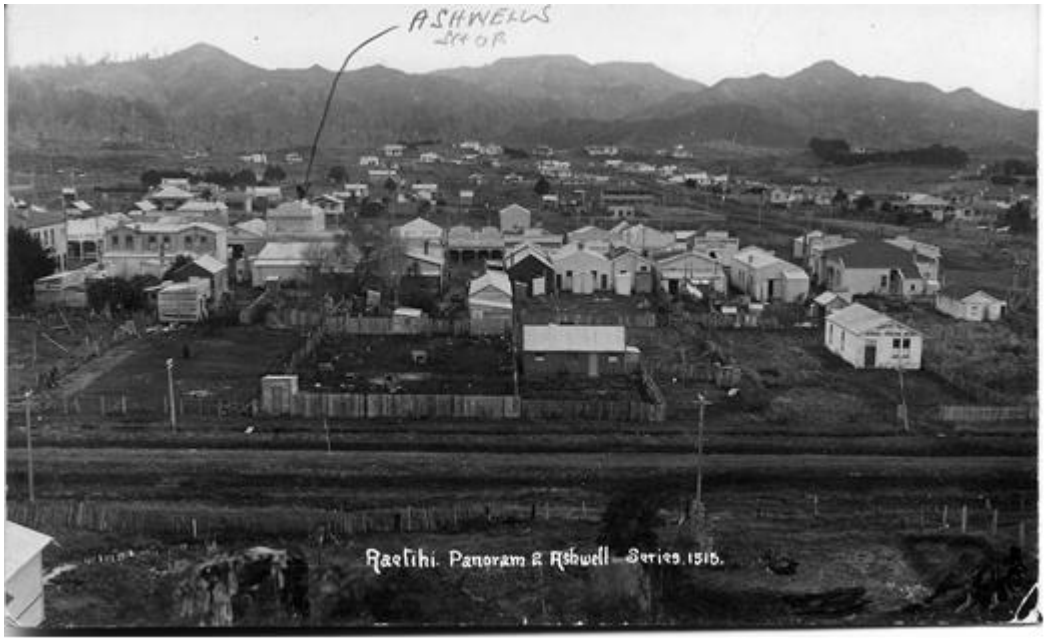
Nanny Waring's involvement in Spiritualism is briefly described in a book self-published by W. C. Nation called *The Unseen World*. She is called Sister Annie. A scan of the book can be found on my web pages under Publications. My understanding is that the Nation and Siggelkow properties in Levin backed on to each other.

3.4 Charles Cecil Nation

My father eventually ran the Ohakune (*The Ohakune Times*) and Raetihi (*The Waimarino Call)* newspapers. C. C. moved to Raetihi to the house on the corner of Ballance Street and Pitt Street where Nanny Waring spent the rest of her life, and he died relatively young from stomach illness (gastritis) and kidney failure (nephritis) in 1928 (the year just before my mother and father married). C. C. is buried in Raetihi cemetery. His father W. C. Nation officiated at the funeral ceremony (religion – Spiritualist) and my future grandfather A. W. Ashwell was the registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages who signed the death registration. My father is buried next to C. C. in what was an unmarked grave until around the year 2000 when my sister Betty got bronze plaques made for him and Nanny Waring, also buried in Raetihi cemetery. My sister Rosemary's remains and my mother's ashes are buried in the same grave plot as my father which was probably bought at the same time as C. C.'s plot. Nanny Waring had outlived two husbands, and her third husband, who she married in the year following C. C.'s death, was William Stephen Waring (Uncle Bill) – a World War 1 veteran – who worked in the printing office in Raetihi and had boarded with Nanny and C. C. I have only one memory of the printing office in King Street, Raetihi (behind the old BNZ), and that is of the noise and the fire burning inside to melt the lead for the linotype used to set

the text for paper. *The Waimarino County Call* and *The Ohakune Times* were eventually closed down and sold with the last issue of the Call being on 1 June 1948, and my father was no longer in the newspaper business. They were replaced by the *Central District Times*. There are several copies of the newspapers in the National Library in Wellington. The printing office burnt down, probably just before Dad died, and just before I was going to Raetihi School in the 1950s and lived with my sister on the corner of King Street and Ward Street, I occasionally went down King Street and kicked around in the charcoal and ashes of the ruins.

Except between the descendants of my father, Lawrence Nation, our family has no DNA connection to anyone else named Nation. In addition, neither of W. C. Nation's two sons, Charles Cecil and Percy, had children of their own. So, any relatives named Nation will be from the sons of W. C. Nation's father, William Nation.




3.5 Raetihi early 1900s. The printing office is in the right foreground. Ashwell's shop is in the background and the BNZ is on the corner to the right behind the Printing office.

**William Stephen Waring**

Uncle Bill Waring was viewed with mixed feelings by some of our family who saw the marriage as a convenience for him (he was many years younger than Nanny), but my clear feeling was that if he made Nanny happy, he was OK by me. They clearly loved each other (she called him Will, he called her darlin') and Uncle Bill was a good worker, maintaining a large well-kept vegetable garden, keeping the woodhouse filled with very carefully stacked wood for the stove where all the cooking was done (I can still recall the smell of the macrocarpa wood in the wood shed), and helping with the weekly washing – he working the wringer and hanging out the clothes on the wooden-framed clotheslines which could be lowered or raised by ropes and pulleys.

I liked seeing them working happily together. Uncle Bill had shared Nanny's involvement in Spiritualism which played a strong part in W. C. Nation's family. He was secretary of the Spiritualists Association and was involved in publishing their paper, the *Message of Life*. He was a tall thin man with longish flowing grey hair and to a young child at least was an imposing figure. He wore a military greatcoat when he walked briskly off to the Returned Servicemen's Association in the afternoon. I never saw him drunk and think he probably drank very moderately, although he drank most days.

I think the involvement in Spiritualism did not last much beyond the death of W. C. Nation in 1930. My grandmother never referred to it on later life, and I saw no evidence of it. In *The Unseen World* last published in 1922, Nanny Waring is referred to as Sister Annie. The first account of her is in May 1905 (*The Unseen World*, p.83. See p.133 of *The Unseen World* for a photograph with her husband C. C. Nation).

3.6 Sarah and Bill Waring

I remember going around to their place one day and seeing Uncle Bill cutting up a big macrocarpa tree that the neighbour had felled. He was using a long crosscut saw by himself, which meant it was going to be a lot of work. He made coal scuttles for the various families from egg pulp tins from the Ohakune bakehouse. He added a handle to them and painted them black.

My son Prahm looked up his 1st World War record. He was a trooper in a machine gun squad, and it seemed that his job during the war was for him and another soldier to leap on their horses, gallop madly towards the enemy, throw themselves on the ground, and set up a machine gun to lay down covering fire to allow the rest of the troops to advance. I am surprised he made it back from the war. He served almost two years abroad, but much of this time he was affected by illness which meant he could only do light duties. I have his dog-tags (one leather, one metal, one wooden), his discharge from the expeditionary force (on account of illness on active service – I think a chest infection that affected him for the rest of his life), and his pay books. He particularly enjoyed listening to the British comedy programs on the

radio such as *Take it from Here* with Jimmy Edwards (Mr Glum), June Whitfield and Dick Bentley, *Round the Horne*, *Much Binding in the Marsh* and *Hancock's Half Hour*. He listened to them in the living room where the radio was. He may have died listening to the radio.

3.7 Uncle Bill and Nanny Waring at home in 1959 on their 30th wedding anniversary

In their later days their much younger neighbours who lived across the road, the Whitfields (Trevor and June) who ran the dry-cleaning business in Seddon Street, were especially kind to them.

Nanny Waring made a crocheted bedcover made up of small coloured squares for each of her grandchildren. The squares have a black background, and each square has three other colours. Uncle Bill Waring was responsible for arranging the squares on the kitchen table for Nanny to join together, so that similar colours were not too close to each other. I have two of these and Nitha has carried out some small repairs on them. I hope to pass them on to Nanny Waring's great-great-grandchildren.

3.8 A crocheted bedcover made by Nanny Waring

After Nanny died, Uncle Bill remained living in their house on the corner of Ballance Street and Pitt Street in Raetihi (the house has long since been demolished and the section filled in and other houses built there). He tried living with Betty and Rex and their family for a while, but found he preferred the quieter life of living alone. We had long talks, when I visited him, and he complained that he spent much of his day getting food ready, then cleaning up, and then thinking of the next meal. Nanny was a wonderful cook (especially rice pudding), and he had probably never had to cook before.

Uncle Bill particularly admired W. C. Nation for his breadth of learning and his speaking skills. Both W. C. and Uncle Bill were of an era where it still seemed possible to know something of everything. Before he died, he asked me if I wanted anything from the office he had in the house. My reply was that I just liked it the way it was with its roll-top desk, glass-fronted bookshelves and general air of being in use.

After he died, Betty and Johnny went around to look through the house. They walked into the living room and Betty almost had a heart attack because Uncle Bill was still sitting on the sofa in the living room where he sat to listen to the radio. The undertaker had not yet come to collect the body. He is buried in the returned servicemen's section of the Raetihi cemetery. My second name, Stephen, comes from him (William Stephen Waring). That, in itself, has its story. My brother Peter was originally called Peter William Nation with the William coming from Uncle Bill Waring. However, another member of our extended family died by drowning (see Harriet Ashwell's memoirs *My Life* Chapter 33), and Peter was given the second name of Joseph in his memory, and the William was dropped. When I came along, this was made up for by giving me Uncle Bill's second name of Stephen for one of my second names. This became the first name of Johnny and Audrey's second son, Steven Campbell Nation, so Uncle Bill lives on. Audrey wanted me to help in naming Steve. She chose Steven and

because I was in the pipe band at the time, I chose something Scottish for his second name – Campbell. Sorry, Steve. Steve ended up joining the brass band and not the pipe band, so the name had little effect on his later life.

Everyone unreservedly loved Nanny Waring. She was very short and the kitchen sink bench and the stove in her house were made to be the right height for her. I always remember her wearing a hair net, and responding to questions with “I don’t know, I’m sure.” At times I used to stay with her, and I liked the indoor flush toilet (Raetihi had sewerage long before Ohakune), and loved the cooking. I was not so keen on the morning teas which she hosted every few weeks. The food was delicious – cream sponge cooked to perfection, lamingtons, sandwiches – and the best cups and plates were brought out, but I had to run the gauntlet of the visitors, all elderly ladies, Mrs Aird, Mrs “Girly” Urwin, Mrs Honore, and Mrs Barratt very nicely dressed up and getting served morning tea in the living room rather than the kitchen where meals were normally eaten, who all admired my beautiful long eyelashes. Unfortunately, I found that closing my eyes did not hide my eyelashes.

The table in the kitchen was well hidden beneath a layer of a woven cloth (dark red I think) to protect the wood of the table, covered by a white embroidered tablecloth to protect the red cloth, covered by clear plastic to protect the tablecloth. I don't think I ever actually saw the wooden table top.

There was a plaque hanging on the wall next to the dining table which I never really understood, which said “When a man arises and asserts himself, he gets his own breakfast”. I guess it was a joke.

There was a grandfather clock in the passage which ran the length of the house which made a steady loud reassuring tick and was wound each day by pulling weights hanging on chains. The dark passage and the living room also had feathery toitoi fronds in ceramic jars. Nanny apparently used to make pumpkin wine and Peter Nation got into trouble because he poked the pumpkins hanging in the storage room with a broom handle. I was better behaved.

Nanny had a stroke in later life and walked with a slight dragging of her foot. She had so often cared for us when we were ill that we were sad to see that. Her last days were not happy ones as she wasted away and were spent in Raetihi Hospital, basically unable to take care of herself. She always considered herself lucky as she told Nanny Ashwell, as she was able to see her son, Lawrence, almost every day of his life. When my father lived in Ohakune but worked in the printing office in Raetihi, he used to have lunch with her and Uncle Bill each day. I remember him bringing her canned food and groceries from Ohakune.

For her birthday, my brother Johnny gave her an enlarged hand painted photo of my father. I remember her tears as she looked at it. They had been through a lot together.

**Violet Pearl Nation**

| Violet Pearl Nation 20 January 1920 | Age |
|---|---|
| Death of step-father C. C. Nation 28 November 1928 | 8 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Married Noel Slight 26 October 1940 | 20 |
| Divorced Noel Slight 7 November 1945 | 25 |
| Changed name to Ann Stephana Waring in 1946 | 26 |
| Went to Australia | |
| Married Lou Harris-Thompson 6 February 1958 | 38 |
| Became an Australian citizen 20 February 1976 | 56 |
| Lou died 1998 | 78 |
| Died 29 December 2006 | 86 |

Nanny had an adopted daughter during her marriage to C. C Nation, Violet Pearl Nation, who was known as Pearl but who later changed her name to Ann Stephana Waring.

3.9 Pearl, Nanny, Lawrence, W. C. Nation, Charlie Nation

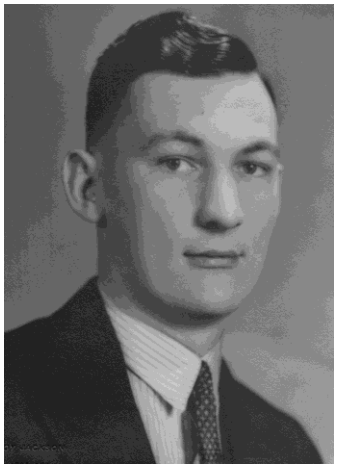
According to W. C. Nation's reminiscences she "came into their lives in January 1920", which was her birth month. C. C. thought highly of her and left her 500 pounds in his will to be paid out as a weekly stipend. Betty thought that she may have been the daughter of one of Nanny's unmarried sisters. The only evidence for this was the resemblance between her and one of Nanny Waring's sisters. Lilian. She loved my father who she saw as her elder brother (He was almost twenty years older) and always spoke highly of him. When she was old enough, she left her home in Raetihi and went to Palmerston North, and she married Noel Slight who was in the air force. They divorced about four or five years later.

She hated the name Pearl, and in 1946 legally changed her name from Violet Pearl Slight to Ann Stephana Waring. The Ann was part of Nanny Waring's name, and Stephana was a feminization of Uncle Bill's middle name Stephen. The witnesses were W. S. Waring and L. W. Nation, printers of Raetihi.

She then went to Sydney where she worked in Ascham School for girls, living in Potts Point. She married Lou Harris-Thompson who was a purser on the P&O line and later worked in the head office. They built a house at 15 Handley Avenue, Turramurra (just outside of Sydney) and I stayed with them there several times when I was at university, and later Nitha and I visited them there whenever we passed through Sydney. She worked in public relations for Romano's restaurant. Aunty Ann was president of the Women's committee for the Sydney Opera House for fifteen years and did lots of charitable work. At one time, under Lou's direction, I cleared ivy away from the walls of the house, which I did with some fear as I did not know what might be lurking in there. It was Australia after all!

3.10 Ann (Pearl) Waring

Ann kept poodles and had a lively social life, and tried convincing me to get a poodle. On a world trip, Lou became very ill, and they did not have medical insurance. They had to mortgage their house to cover the costs, and financially they never really recovered.



3.11 Lou Harris-Thompson

She was a person who knew what she wanted and worked hard to get it. She told me how she managed to get a permanent parking place in central Sydney. She went to the manager of a parking building in Sydney and said, “I have to come into town three days a week and I only have a very small car. I am not some silly housewife on shopping expeditions but am doing important work. I am sure you can fit me in somewhere.”

She collected art work of various kinds from emerging artists and had it around her house. Some were bottles heated and distorted into various elongated shapes which I viewed as art with some scepticism. At one time, we brought a set of bronze cutlery from Thailand for her that she wanted. Although her house was small, she had a dining room that was only a dining room.

Appearances were very important to her, and she hid Lou’s alcoholism well, even though it caused her many problems. She wrote about these problems, which included threats of violence, to one of Lou’s relatives, but never posted the letters. Although I had noticed Lou’s love of wine, I did not suspect how it dominated his life. Andrew Smith (Lou’s nephew) and his brother accidentally found out, and Ann told him about it. It seemed to give her some relief to share her burden. When sober, Lou was charming and thoughtful, with a good sense of humour. He was a tall, very gentle and very gentlemanly man, who everyone liked.

After Lou died, she lived on in the house, and when I got a disconnected line when I called her from New Zealand, I eventually found out via the Sydney Opera House that she had died. Several months later, a neighbour of mine in Wilton, Andrew Smith, who I knew because we were on the same committee at the university, dropped in with a box of Uncle Bill Waring’s papers and photographs. A real treasure chest. It turned out he was a relative of Lou’s and he and his brother were responsible for wrapping up their estate. He noticed my name on some books on the shelves in Aunty Ann’s house and said to himself, I know this person! Among the papers and the many photographs was the notebook in which W. C. Nation had written his family history, which I scanned and transcribed and posted on my web site (see Appendix 3). At Ann’s funeral, Andrew gave each person there a piece of china or artwork she had collected over the years.

Aunty Ann used to visit Nanny every few years, and my sister Betty wrote to her fairly regularly. She was not close to John or Peter, and as children Betty and Ann had had their disagreements. She always treated me well, and on my first visit to her in Sydney on my way back from travelling in Asia, I was royally treated indeed, going yachting on Sydney harbour, visiting Luna Park, and eating out in restaurants that she was publicity officer for. When we went to Luna Park, Lou and I went on the Mighty Mouse, a terrifying roller coaster with two-person cars. I was worried that they were not made to carry a person as big as Lou and might come off the rails.

When she later met Nitha on our way back to New Zealand after being married, she gave Nitha a ring with a large yellow stone that Lou had given her. She was very fond of Nitha. We also have a teapot that she had painted herself, which we still use. Aunty Ann continued to keep poodles which in their later years made a terrible mess of her house.

Ann and Lou did not have children and so it is not possible to find her birthparents through DNA.

## Chapter 4 My Ashwell grandparents

The life of my mother's parents, Harriet and Walter Ashwell, is well described in Harriet's book, *My Life*. My sister Betty described the book as "the world according to Nanny Ashwell". This is clearly true, and it is not surprising as she wrote it. Betty felt that Nanny Ashwell glossed over the mental difficulties that my mother faced and painted a rather rosy picture of what was a difficult life for my mother (see Chapter 6 for more on this). Nonetheless, *My Life* is a very useful, well written account of my grandparents' life. It seems that my grandmother wrote it mainly from her memory, as there was no evidence of diaries after she died. The book is around 100,000 words long (the length of the average novel) and was written in longhand around the time she was eighty years old. I used voice recognition software to transcribe it and K. C. Kang, then owner of Compass Publishing in Korea, kindly printed 125 copies free for me, and each living descendant of Harriet received a copy. Since then, various groups of Ashwell descendants have got together in Raetihi to look at the graves in the Raetihi Cemetery and to visit the site of the Ashwell farm in Ameku Road, the Ashwell shop in Seddon Street, Raetihi School where Harriet taught, and Pipiriki where the riverboat from Wanganui brought people and supplies.

My grandfather was named Alfred Walter Ashwell, after his father, but he was called Walter.

| Alfred Walter Ashwell born 24 April 1874 | Age |
|---|---|
| Left England for New Zealand 15 September 1892 | 18 |
| Married Harriet Mahony 4 November 1907 | 33 |
| Birth of daughter Dorothy 30 June 1909 | 35 |
| Birth of daughter Florence 29 June 1911 | 37 |
| Birth of son Willsford (Bill) 31 March 1914 | 39 |
| Birth of daughter Ruth October 1915 | 41 |
| Birth of son Roy 6 June 1918 | 44 |
| Death of daughter Ruth 24 May 1920 | 45 |
| Birth of daughter Hope 14 August 1921 | 47 |
| Birth and death of son James August-October 1923 | 49 |
| Birth of son Laurie 12 September 1925 | 51 |
| Moved to Gisborne 1937 | 63 |
| Walter died 23 April 1958 | 83 |

Grandpa died one day before his 84th birthday.

The following account was written by Jeffrey Ashwell's granddaughter and is a very useful addition to Harriet's book as it focuses more on the Ashwell family.

### Alfred Ashwell (1846-1921) and his branch of the family

Alfred was the seventh child of James Amos and Hannah Pratt, and he was a boy of five when they moved from their farm in Eaton Bray, Bedfordshire to Stortford Park Farm, just outside Bishops Stortford. The new house was much larger with big barns and well planted

gardens. The children were all brought up as Methodists and attended the chapel in town. The Ashwell and Pratt families had been farmers for generations and James Amos trained his growing sons to be good farmers as they worked through the different jobs according to the seasons.

Alfred got to know a local girl, Ellen Beard and in 1873 they were married at Bishops Stortford Independent chapel in Water Lane, later to become Congregational. Ellen came from the village of Berden, 6 miles to the north of Stortford where her family kept a shop. Alfred and Ellen set up home and farmed at Thorley House farm, where their son Walter and twins Edwin and Frank were born. After a few years they moved to Sawtrees farm at Thundridge. The house has been well preserved to the present and is now known as Sawtrees Manor, being a largely original manor house of historic interest. Four more children, Fred, William, Ernie and finally a girl, Nell (Ellen) were born at Sawtrees. Sadly, the twins and William all died as infants.

During the 1880s, Alfred farmed at Piggotts, another ancient manor house, a photo of which is in the profile of his brother Thomas, who farmed there at other times. Walter, the eldest son, was apprenticed to his uncle Arthur, Alfred's brother, to learn the watch making and jewellery business at his North Street shop. Alfred had worked at traditional mixed farming for some 20 years since leaving home but latterly it had become less profitable. He and his brothers worked rented farms so each year, good or bad, there was always the rent to pay as well as the men's wages, before any profit could be taken. At this time adverts, such as the following, were appearing in the local paper. “The increasing demand for New Zealand produce in the English markets presents a favourable opportunity for those possessing a knowledge of farming and some capital to embark in farming pursuits in the colony.” Details of how to get further information followed.

I feel sure that Alfred considered this possibility long and hard. He probably talked to his sister's family, the Parkes, about it. Alfred and Ellen were not young, and Ellen was eight years older than Alfred. Finally, there were two very wet years resulting in poor harvests and the momentous decision was taken. By now, Walter was a fully trained watchmaker. The family sold up and left Piggotts. Alfred did not have enough money saved, for he would need to buy land and support the family until the new farm became profitable. He took them to London where he worked as a teamster until he had sufficient funds. They sailed from Plymouth on the 19th September 1892 on board the steam ship *Ruapehu*. She was designed to carry passengers as well as refrigerated meat and arrived in Wellington 47 days later. Alfred and his family travelled 80 miles to Palmerston North, a well-developed new town. Here they stayed for a year until the land they had come out to farm was allocated by ballot. Alfred's nephew, Alfred James Parkes, known as A.J., who was 27, either sailed with them or soon after because Walter, then 19, writes of riding with him to their land.

4.1 1892 Alfred Ashwell and family before leaving England. Ernie, Walter, Fred, Nell. Alfred and Ellen sitting.

Walter and A.J. arrived to camp on the land on 4th November 1893 after an exhausting journey of about a further 80 miles, much of it on narrow bush tracks. Alfred had bought 400 acres and A.J. 100. They hoped that by taking land to the north, it would have a warmer climate, but they arrived to find this was not the case due to the high altitude. This cheap land was hilly, covered in native forest and without a proper access road. It was very close to the volcano, Mount Ruapehu. Roads had been surveyed and cleared but were only 6 ft. wide, without bridges and unsurfaced. Being cut through dense, shady forest, they were almost always wet and muddy. The only flat land had been allocated for the township of Raetihi but as yet there was just one hutment on the site. It must have been a great relief to find that settler Peter Brass had arrived ahead of them to take up neighbouring land. He was to become a great friend. The first job was to build a house with walls made from planks set into the ground upright and wooden shingles on the roof. Between them, the Ashwells and Peter Brass built the mile of road to allow wheeled access to their farms.

The forest was beautiful with ferns and many different trees; full of unfamiliar birds and their songs. But it would not produce an income for the farmers and had to be cleared. There were men who carried out this work for wages, but we have no record that work was done by anyone outside the family. The technique was to fell the bush during the winter, let it dry and then burn as much as possible in late summer. Large trees were cut off high and the tall

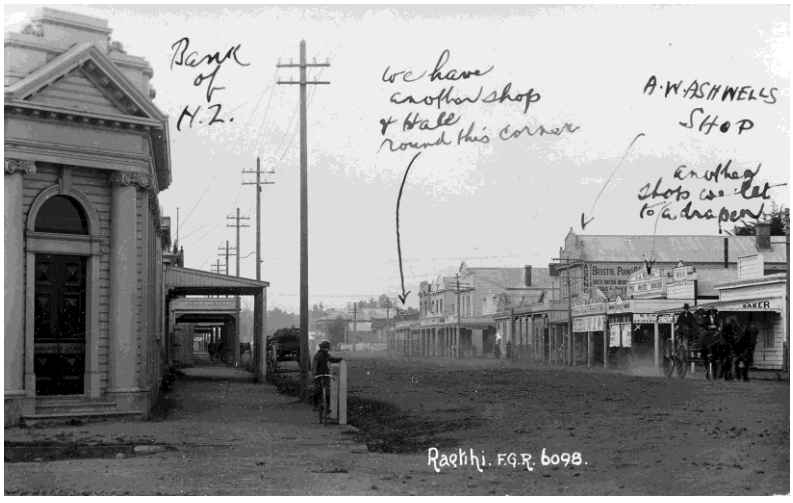
stumps remained after the burn along with fallen logs and a thick layer of ash. Grass seed from England was sown and grew. Cows were gradually brought in but at first it was difficult to keep them and the horses through the winter as there was no affordable feed available. Settlers soon found that the cattle did well if turned out into the bush in winter, and paths were cut to give them access. Sheep came in later but soon turned black from the ash. The new landscape, dotted with blackened stumps and logs was a strange one. It remained so for 20 years and was not fully cleared until bulldozers came into use. There was also a lot of work to be done in making fences. It was fortunate that Alfred had three sons to help with all the work, for Walter did not start his watchmaker's business until he married. The farm was at One Tree Hill but was later re-named Stortford Hills [in Ameku Road, Raetihi].

Meanwhile there was a lot for Ellen and Nell to do in order to feed and keep house for six people in very primitive conditions. Nell was only 13 when they arrived. I assume they ate game from the bush in the early days; wild pigs and native pigeons. Supplies were difficult to get and very expensive due to transport costs. They were brought by riverboat [from Wanganui] for 70 miles along the Wanganui River and then the 17 miles from Pipiriki by wagon, or by pack horse when wet. The winter of 1894 was so bad that provisions had to be carried on foot. Walter carried a 50lb sack of flour on his back. After that people stocked up on essentials before the winter set in. As the farm animals and chickens became established, there were meat, milk and eggs available. Ellen and Nell made butter and cheese. Candles and soap were made from surplus fat.

They had brought seeds from England, and a high priority was to get a vegetable garden going to provide food. The soil was good but the late and early frosts, due to the high altitude caught them out in the early years. With the flower seeds, Ellen and Nell gradually created a beautiful flower garden; there were forget-me-nots, violets and primroses as well as trees and shrubs. Alfred and Ellen's first grandchild, Dorothy, was born in 1909 and has recorded the family history. She remembered the laundry facilities as consisting of two coppers and a bench outside the house. Dorothy does not mention cooking arrangements, but other early settlers used camp ovens. At some time, Alfred suffered a bad accident when he was injured by a ram. After this, his son Fred took over running the farm. Dorothy only remembers Alfred as using crutches and later a wheelchair. He also suffered from arthritis and had a further accident when the wheel of his phaeton (gig) hit a stone, and the vehicle turned over. Although no bones were broken, his mobility became worse after this.

4.2 The Ashwell farm in Ameku Road, Raetihi

The use of fire for clearing forest was effective but could have disastrous consequences. If the wind changed direction and strengthened, the fire could run out of control, burning everything in its path. The Ashwell farm was burned out and rebuilt three times in the early years. One bad fire was in 1908. The settlers were particularly vulnerable due to the large numbers of semi-burnt stumps and logs left on the cleared ground. Also, wood was their only affordable building material as corrugated iron and fencing wire were very expensive. Another fear was of injury and there was no doctor in the area. Anyone injured had to be carried on a stretcher to Pipiriki by relays of men, and put on the weekly paddle steamer for the 70 mile journey to Wanganui hospital. Understandably there was a strong bond of friendship and self-help between neighbouring settlers. Most of them had a strong Christian faith.




4.3 Walter Ashwell's shop in Raetihi

While the Ashwells were working to establish their farm, the land allotted for the township of Raetihi was being cleared and developed. Stores started to open and in 1896 a school and Methodist church were built. The Ashwell and Parkes families were Methodists. A dairy factory opened which was a great help to the local farmers. In 1902, A. J. Parkes made a trip back to England and returned with his new wife, having married Rachel Burton in Grimsby.

Walter's business did well, expanding as the town grew. He had a large shop in Seddon Street and sold newspapers, books and stationery as well as watches, clocks, jewellery and silverware. Walter was an athletic man and did well in the axeman's competitions in the annual shows. He was good at golf and bowls and also had a fund of jokes. He was a Borough Councillor, registrar and at one time, court reporter.

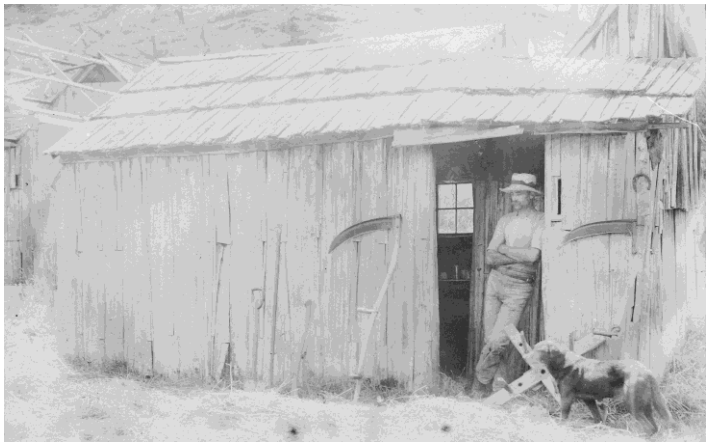
Before she started school, Dorothy spent a lot of time with her grandparents who loved having her. By the time her memories begin, they had a lovely farm, and her uncle Fred was running it. Her uncle Ernie had bought a farm of his own at Taranaki, and they only saw him on occasional visits. Ernie served in the 1914-18 war. He married Isabella Hay late in life. Ernie became very deaf in later life.

4.4 1912 The Ashwell family with Harriet holding Flo (my mother), and Dorothy between her grandparents. Walter, Fred, Ernie and Nell are in the back row.

Dorothy describes her grandparent's home as modest with two bedrooms and an attic room. Her aunt Nell had taken over a lot of the tasks that Ellen had previously done. There were more livestock now and Alfred kept turkeys as he had done in England. Nell milked the eight cows and made butter to sell. She worked in the garden where there were apple trees, hazel bushes and strawberries. Strawberry plants were grown for the market. Nell did the washing

and the baking, including all the bread for the family. Like others, they kept open house on Sunday afternoons, particularly for new arrivals from England and people from isolated farms. This meant that Nell was always very busy cleaning and baking until late on a Saturday. Alfred and Ellen drove to church in the phaeton. If the roads were muddy, Ellen rode side saddle on Topsy, her quiet grey mare. She wore a black poke bonnet and at home she played the harmonium.

Gradually roads were improved, and the railway came nearer. Sawmills followed the railway as it provided transport to take the timber out. More land was offered for sale bringing in new settlers. Raetihi continued to develop at a fast pace as people moved in. Tree stumps in the town were cleared and roads metalled. In 1917, the railway reached Raetihi, and the sawmills arrived. In the same year, Fred married Lydia Hunt, a widow with two sons, and they settled in Queen Street, Raetihi. He is listed as a contractor in Stones directory.



4.5 Fred Ashwell and his dog sweep in the Ameku Road farm shed

By 1918, Alfred had sold the farm and along with Ellen and Nell, had moved to Ranfurly Terrace in Raetihi. They had a beautiful garden and won several prizes for it. Fred grew the vegetables and Nell the flowers. Alfred wheeled himself around holding a Dutch hoe to remove weeds. Then one evening in March (Autumn), after a dry spell, people were horrified to see a forest fire approaching, driven by a 70 mile an hour wind. The fire destroyed farms in its path and hit Raetihi at 1am. People worked all night trying to save their homes. Many buildings were burned and others survived but the fire did not get hold in the town centre. Nell managed to save her parent's home and next morning rain dampened down the fire. Many people were badly affected by smoke but miraculously only three died. There was a lot of damage; stock were killed and sawmills, bridges, fencing and telegraph poles destroyed. A.J. Parkes lost three new residences. The following winter was a cold one and the town was hit by a bad epidemic of the Spanish 'flu which took nine lives. The infection had been brought back by the soldiers returning from Europe.

[A young schoolteacher, Harriet Mahony moved to Raetihi to take up a post at the school. Nell invited her back to the Ashwell farm after church. Harriet became friends with Nell and got to know all the family. In 1907 she married Walter. He moved into town and set up a shop.] [The early British settlers were very much part of the Empire and felt a great loyalty to

the Crown. Many volunteered to serve in the 1914-18 war. One such was Ernie Ashwell. Harriet's only brother, Willsford Mahony also volunteered. For his brave actions in France, he was promoted to corporal and awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal, but he returned home having lost his right arm. Bill could no longer work as a cabinet maker and Walter and Harriet helped him to set up a stationery business in nearby Ohakune. Both these young men were in touch with their uncle Jeffery, my grandfather, during their time in Europe. Jeffrey felt empathy with them as his own three sons served in France. There are 41 names of men who died in the war on the Raetihi memorial gates.]

Nell had worked very hard since arriving at the farm. Then in Raetihi she had the burden of care for both her elderly parents. Ellen suffered from dementia at the end of her life, and Alfred was not mobile. They died within two years of each other so that in 1921 Nell was left on her own. She married Harold Lucas. He was a long standing family friend and distant cousin of Ellen who had arrived from Henham in Essex in 1909. It is thought that Nell suffered severe depression following her parent's deaths for soon after her marriage she took her own life [into the river next to the cemetery]. She had been much loved by all her family, and they felt the loss deeply. [She is buried next to her parents in Raetihi Cemetery.]

4.6 Alfred, Ellen and old Bob the horse

It is interesting to look at the outcome of Alfred's decision to move to New Zealand. The early years were tremendously hard, and he must have wondered if his savings would last out until the farm became profitable. Not all settlers did succeed, and some packed up and left. His decision influenced others in the family to come to the area, and they built up a network of mutual support. Alfred and sons Fred and Ernie were able to farm without the restrictions and conditions imposed by landlords back in England. It is ironic that one of these prohibited the felling of trees whereas on the new land whole forests had to be cleared. Walter had freedom from the class system that prevailed in England at the time. The Ashwells prospered in the boom time in Raetihi, while the sawmills were busy and future generations had good opportunities in a developing country.

*Main sources of information*

New Zealand family memories, written down by Dorothy Skuse, Walter Ashwell and Harriet Ashwell.
Raetihi School Jubilee 1971
Raetihi and District, 1887-1922, a history thesis by E.G. McDowell, 1936.
The Hills of the Waimarino by Elizabeth Allen, 1984
[The end of the section written by Jeffery Ashwell's granddaughter, possibly Flora Wilkins]

**Harriet Mahony and Walter Ashwell**

| Harriet born 23 September 1882 | Age |
|---|---|
| Married Walter Ashwell 4 November 1907 | 25 |
| Birth of daughter Dorothy 30 June 1909 | 26 |
| Birth of daughter Florence 29 June 1911 | 29 |
| Birth of son Willsford (Bill) 31 March 1914 | 31 |
| Birth of daughter Ruth October 1915 | 33 |
| Birth of son Roy 6 June 1918 | 35 |
| Death of daughter Ruth 24 May 1920 | 37 |
| Birth of daughter Hope 14 August 1921 | 38 |
| Birth and death of son James August-October 1923 | 40 |
| Birth of son Laurie 12 September 1925 | 42 |
| Awarded Coronation medal 1937 | 55 |
| Moved to Gisborne 1938 | 55 |
| Walter died 23 April 1958 | 75 |
| Harriet died 10 October 1974 | 92 |

My grandmother, Nanny Ashwell, was born in Auckland, the eldest child of Willsford Hamilton Mahony and Annie Amelia Mahony (nee Nightingale). Willsford and Annie had eight children, three of whom died young. When Nanny Ashwell was eight years old, the family moved to the Hunterville Mangaweka area, with the family building their own house in Mangaweka. Their father, Willsford, was involved in timber merchandising, and soon he moved to Paeroa take care of the accounts in such a business while his wife and children stayed on in Mangaweka for just under three years. During that time, Nanny Ashwell took the first steps to becoming a teacher, working as a pupil-teacher at Mangaweka School. The rest of the family moved to Paeroa while Nanny continued teaching in Hurleyville, then Raetihi (where she met the Ashwell family), then Clydesdale and then back to Mangaweka. She stopped teaching in 1907 and went to Paeroa to marry Walter Ashwell, my grandfather, in the family home. They then went back to Raetihi where she worked with him in his jewellery and watchmaking business. There is a very full account of their life in Raetihi in her book, *My Life*. All of her eight children were born in Raetihi, and two, Ruth and James, are buried in Raetihi Cemetery.

In Raetihi, the family took an active part in civic affairs with Grandpa and Nanny being the registrars of births, deaths and marriages, and with Grandpa serving on the Borough Council and as Deputy Mayor.

4.7 1918 The Ashwell family

In 4.7, Harriet is holding Roy, and Walter is holding Bill. Dorothy and Flo are at the back with Ruth in the middle.

They prospered, owning the shop in Raetihi, a hall in Raetihi, and a shop in Rangataua. They were one of the early owners of a car. When the depression came however, their business failed. No one was going to buy pianos, jewellery, toys, and gramophones during such a difficult financial time. In 1938, they sold up what they could and went as far away as possible to Gisborne, largely penniless. Most of their children went with them. Dorothy and George Skuse sold their farm on Raetihi Road and followed them to Gisborne. Bill Ashwell stayed on in Wanganui, and my father (Laurie Nation) and mother (Flo) stayed on in Ohakune. My father took over the shop in Rangataua. The Ashwell's shop in Raetihi became a grocery store run by the Marshall family. The second floor of the store had to be demolished, and it became a single storey building. It remains part of the IGA supermarket and using the photo in Chapter 6 (6.5) to examine the rooflines, it is still possible to see its location today.

The Raetihi fire of 19-20 March 1918 is described by my grandmother in *My Life*, and an appendix to the book contains Grandpa's description of the fire.

After moving to Gisborne, Nanny and Grandpa were never well off again, and after living rent-free in Massey Road and for a small rent in 3 Dalrymple Road, which Dorothy and George eventually bought, they lived in a semi-detached pensioner flat in Anzac Street. After Grandpa died, Nanny lived in a single person pensioner flat in Lytton Road. I once stayed with her there on a holiday in Gisborne. She cooked a piece of fish for my meal, and I noticed that she had none for herself, but was eating an apple. She said she would eat later, but I saw that she was giving me what would have been her food.

Through all of these happy and tough times, she remained a strong Christian, and I am sure that that helped to keep her going. I remember that when our family gave her money, it was often stipulated that she should use it to buy something for herself, as we knew that she would give at least 10% as a tithe to the church.

It must have been hard leaving Raetihi where they were well off, well known and appreciated, but they clearly felt they could not stay. Nanny visited again once or twice to see our family, but she had clearly left her Raetihi life behind.

I recall doing the dishes with her in Ohakune as she explained the order in which things should be washed – glasses first, then cutlery, plates and the pots left till last.


4.8 1957 Family at Walt and Harriet's golden wedding in Anzac Street in Gisborne

In the back row in 4.8: Rex Bryers, Geoff Smith, Bill Ashwell, Laurie Ashwell, Alma Ashwell, Bernice Ashwell, Herbert Parkes. In the front row: Molly Parkes, Bill Mahony, Walter Ashwell, Harriet Ashwell, Dorothy Skuse, Hope Smith, Betty Bryers.

My grandfather Walter (Grandpa) is well described in Nanny Ashwell's book, and is lovingly described in Chapter 6 by Betty. I often visited my grandparents in Gisborne as a child, when they were living in a state house in Anzac Street. My visits generally were in the Christmas holidays, and I was usually taken there by Uncle Bill Mahony, Harriet's brother.

When I stayed with them in Anzac Street, Grandpa Ashwell got around on crutches as he had badly injured himself falling off his bicycle. He had a small garden at the back of the house. They had a telephone, but few of the neighbours did and there were often knocks on the door of people wanting to use the phone. Grandpa used to sing at night, partly to distract himself from the pain in his hip. Whenever he sang in the small concerts we put on, he sang so loudly that Malcolm and I used to put our heads under the cushions. We went fishing with him one

day off a bridge not too far from Anzac Street. On the way home he fell, but a kind neighbour saw that and brought him back in her car.

**My great-uncle Bill Mahony**

| Willsford Frederick Mahony | Age |
|---|---|
| Born 4 November 1884 | |
| Fought and drank in World War 1 1915-1917 | 31 |
| Lost his arm 23 October 1917 | 33 |
| Discharged due to wounds 3 November 1918 | 33 |
| Retired to Auckland around 1961 | 76 |
| Died 24 January 1964 | 79 |

4.9 Bill Mahony off to World War 1

I have very fond memories of Bill Mahony. He lived most of his life in Ohakune. There is a chapter and other pages devoted to him in Nanny Ashwell's book *My Life*. My first memories of him were in his shop which no longer operated in the late 1940s. A fairly large bunch of kids from the neighbourhood, including me, had broken into it and we were chased out by Uncle Bill. I remember feeling very ashamed as we walked out of the shop, heads bowed, past him. Before the war, his record says he was a carpenter, and I recall him fixing the sashes on the windows of the house in Ohakune with just one arm. His father was certainly

skilled at woodwork and my grandmother's book tells of the battles between Bill and his father around carpentry.

From living in the back of the shop he moved to rooms above the RSA at the end of town, just down from the old Ohakune Post Office. This may not have been a good idea because it put him a bit too close to the bar in the RSA where many were keen to shout drinks for the one-armed veteran of the First World War.

Old copies of the *Ohakune Times* show that he served on the Ohakune Borough Council and at times was deputy Mayor, president of the bowling club, and president of the RSA. His shop advertised regularly in the local newspaper, *The Ohakune Times*, even before my father and mother were married. The contents of the advertisement changed often, offering school stationery, fishing equipment, Christmas decorations, gramophones, glassware, fancy goods, and books. In many ways his shop seemed like the Ohakune version of the Ashwell's Raetihi shop, so I guess that is more than just a coincidence. He also sold newspapers and delivered some of them himself, riding a bicycle with the right hand half of the handlebars sawn off. John Nation may also have helped with the deliveries, as one of John's stories was how he got up one frosty morning and absent-mindedly stepped over a bundle of papers that some kind person had collected from the railway station for him, and cycled to Ohakune Junction to collect them.

When I was a young child, he was in his mid-sixties and ready for retirement. After my parents died, Uncle Bill and I would go by train leaving Ohakune Junction around midnight and then arriving in Palmerston North in the morning. We would then hang around for several hours waiting for the railcar to Gisborne. The last part of the trip from Wairoa to Gisborne seemed to take for ever.

My grandmother was particularly fond of her younger brother Bill, but he had trouble coping with her strong religious beliefs. One day in exasperation, he said to her. "I am going down the pub, and I'm gonna get drunk." Later he felt sorry, and said to me, "I shouldn't have said that." My grandmother had a somewhat romantic view of the First World War, largely I think because she was proud of her brother going off to do his duty, and distinguishing himself. He served with the 2nd Battalion Auckland Regiment. He said to me, "On the first day I went to war, I was scared, but after that I wasn't scared at all". The citation for his Distinguished Conduct Medal reads "For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty in an attack. He took command of his platoon and organized them after they had suffered heavy casualties. On seeing the flank of the advance held up, he rushed forward with a Lewis gun and with his section captured a pillbox with thirty prisoners. He then led his platoon to their objective. His courage and coolness inspired the whole company."

Unfortunately, his distinguished conduct did not apply to when he went on leave, and his service record shows his rank fluctuated between lance-corporal and corporal. At the front, he would earn promotion. Then he would go on leave and as a result of his behaviour, he would be demoted. He often came to our place for a meal, and when I saw him coming up the street, I could see how much he had drunk by the angle of his body. The further he leaned to the

right, the drunker he was. At Christmas, his presents were usually books salvaged from his now closed shop.

4.10 Ohakune Christmas: Uncle Bill Mahony far right. John, Laurie, Betty in front. Nanny Waring on left. Flo in the middle.

Around 1961, he decided to go into an old soldiers' home in Auckland, and he went there with his old mate Bill Pearce who had the same idea. They called themselves Peace and Harmony rather than Pearce and Mahony. He is buried in the returned soldiers' section of Waikumete cemetery in Auckland, not far from the entrance to the cemetery. His mother, Annie Amelia Mahony (nee Nightingale) is buried right at the other end of the cemetery.

**My uncles and aunts**

My only aunt on my father's side of the family was Aunty Ann, so most of my uncles and aunts were from my mother's side, the Ashwells.

My uncles, aunts and cousins played a big part in my life. Uncle Bill Ashwell and Aunty Alma with Colleen, Ngaire, Barry and Bill lived in Wanganui, and I often went to stay with them. Uncle Bill Ashwell was particularly close to my mother, and she stayed with them when she needed a break. Barry and I were born in the same year, and we encouraged each other to get up to mischief. This included getting up very early in the morning and running around the block in our pyjamas. For me, going to Wanganui was going to the big city. The bedroom we slept in had bunks, and I particularly liked being in the top bunk.

4.11 Jim Colleen Pat, Barry Bill Ngaire

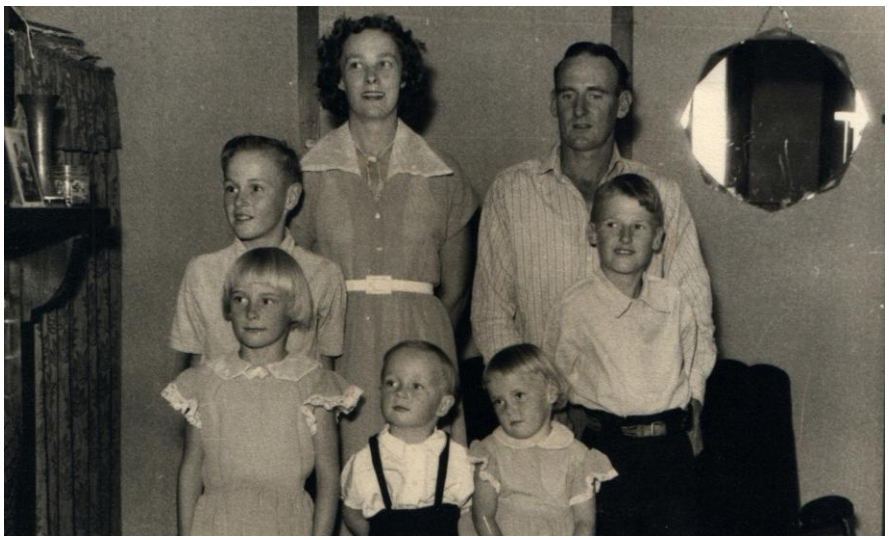
4.12 Paul Nation, Bill Ashwell and Barry Ashwell in Wanganui

Bill Ashwell and family later moved to Taihape, into a new house that Bill was particularly proud of. Bill and family used to come to Raetihi for the Agriculture and Produce (A&P) show, and the Annual Rodeo. I looked forward to Aunty Alma's bacon and egg pie. Bacon and egg pie is still one of my favourites. Uncle Bill was always enthusiastic and entertaining, and full of stories.

In Gisborne, I had three sets of uncles, aunts and cousins – Aunty Dorothy and Uncle George Skuse with my cousins Rosemary, Roy, Ted and George; Aunty Hope and Uncle Geoff Smith with my cousins John, Malcolm who was my age, Irene, the twins Mark and Moira, Susan and Kirk; and Uncle Laurie and Aunty Bernice with my cousins Michael (my age), Brian, Jillian, and Marie-ann.

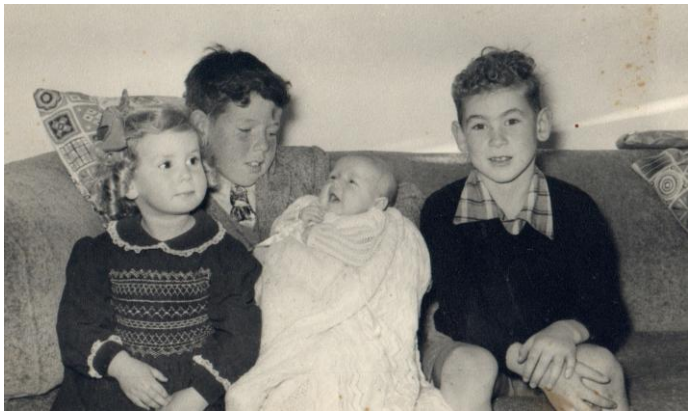
4.13 The Skuse family

The Skuses lived in a large early 1900s house in Dalrymple Road on a few acres of land next to a river. They had fruit trees and a large vegetable garden. Roy had made canvas-covered kayaks, and we went paddling on the river. It was a miracle I survived, because I could not swim. Dorothy had a boarder or two and they were always interesting. Once or twice Barry Ashwell and I both were in Gisborne at the same time. George and I remained in touch over the years, and he often stayed with us in Wellington, visiting the university and the monastery at Stokes Valley.



4.14 The Smith family (Susan yet to come)

The Smiths were living in Disraeli Street when I first went to Gisborne. I probably led Malcolm into trouble more than he led me into trouble. Malcolm and I made a bus-trip, just the two of us, to some park, way down Back Ormond Road, I guess. The bus-driver felt sorry for us and bought us a soft-drink. When I think back on it, it was an adventure that children would never be allowed to have today. We were miles from home headed somewhere we knew little of. Gisborne was full of such adventures for me. We were anxious to get home, because we knew that there was home-made ice-cream that night. Malcolm and I also spent about a week camping in a tent at Kaiti Beach. Although Uncle Geoff came to check on us each day, we were left to our own devices, to cook our food, and make sure we did not drown in one of the many holes just under the water off the beach. Grandad Smith had an allotment not too far away and we got sweet corn from there, the first I had ever eaten. And sweet it was too. As usual, I got terribly sunburnt. There was an aunt who lived near, and we used to go to her place to get fresh water. The visits to Gisborne were not so frequent when I was at secondary school. While I was at university, there was a very memorable visit where I drove Johnny's old Morris Cowley bread van over to get it fixed up by Uncle Geoff. The van was on its last legs and the local garage in Ohakune would not give Johnny an acceptable price for it, so he gave it to me. The trip there was an odyssey. I had to put oil in it every fifty miles. You could see the road under my feet because the floor on the driver's side had rusted out. The seat was sprouting stuffing. The glove box was mouldy because the windscreen leaked. The windscreen was all scratched, because Audrey had wiped the condensation off it while wearing her diamond ring. The back bumper was missing, and it had Thomas Bakery proudly written along its sides. One of my flatmates, Ian Harland, accompanied me as far as Hastings where he lived. At one point, in the dark of night, I realised that there were around fifty cars backed up behind us. I spent the night with Ian and continued on the next day. Uncle Geoff got to work on it and gave Malcolm and me jobs to do – sanding it in preparation for painting and cleaning it up where we could. The seat was re-covered, the van was painted dark blue, the windscreen replaced, and there was a great amount of welding and mechanical work. After a month or so, it looked great, although a keen eye could still see Thomas Bakery along the sides. Geoff said he had worked on everything except the engine. He said it would last about two years. Almost two years to the day, I was driving back to Ohakune from Wellington at the end of the year, and one of the pistons went. It was eventually repaired and sold to help cover the repair costs.



4.15 The Laurie Ashwell family

Laurie Ashwell and family were living in Churchill Crescent when I first stayed with them. Because Michael and I were the same age, and we were both boys, I had more to do with him than with Brian or Jillian and Marie-ann. One particular piece of mischief was stealing apples from the neighbour's tree at night. Irresistible to a fruit lover like me. Unfortunately, the branch we were climbing on broke. Rather than just leave it we decided to saw it off which was not a smart decision as a broken branch could be an act of nature, but a sawn off one?? Nitha, Betty and I visited Gisborne most summers for several years. By then Laurie John had died, and Bernice was living in a lovely new house in Anzac Crescent not far from Nanny and Grandpa Ashwell's old state house. I lost contact with Michael after he moved to Auckland.

It is only in recent years that I realised that my visits to Gisborne had several purposes. One was to give me a holiday. Another was to keep contact with my grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins, and another was to give my brothers and sisters a break from taking care of me.

## Chapter 5 Florence and Lawrence – my mother and father

### My mother

| Florence Forde Ashwell | Age |
|---|---|
| Born 29 June 1911 | |
| Birth of first child Elizabeth Elsie Nation 29 November 1928 | 17 |
| Married Lawrence Watty Nation 10 July 1929 | 18 |
| Birth of second child John Lawrence Nation 15 May 1930 | 18 |
| Birth of third child Rosemary Ann Nation 25 August 1931 | 20 |
| Rosemary Ann died 23 September 1932 | 21 |
| Birth of fourth child Peter Joseph Nation 11 January 1934 | 23 |
| Birth of fifth child Ian Stephen Paul Nation 28 April 1944 | 32 |
| Died 7 December 1949 | 38 |

5.1 Ernie Ashwell and Florence

When I was five my mother committed suicide. Her body was found on Christmas day 1949 just over two weeks after she disappeared, and my sister remembers the tearful phone call from Aunty Alma Ashwell in Wanganui where my mother had been staying, telling the family of her death. My parents were married in 1929 when she was 18 and my father 28. Their wedding and her early life are described in my grandmother's memoirs *My Life – Harriet Ashwell* (available from my web site).

My mother was born in Raetihi in 1911. She went to Raetihi School and for secondary school joined her sister Dorothy at Wanganui Girls College in Wanganui, about 90 kilometres from Raetihi. When she left school, she worked at Urwin and Drury's, the drapers, in Raetihi. I knew that shop well, because that was where we bought all our clothes. It was fascinating. Money and dockets were put into cylinders which were sent pneumatically to old Mr Urwin who was in a small windowed room. He sent back the change. After working there, my mother worked in her parents' shop. I guess the move occurred when she found she was pregnant.

5.2 Flo Ashwell aged 3

5.3 Dorothy and Flo in college uniform

The following report of the wedding is probably from the newspaper my father ran, so the wedding is well reported.

5.4 Flo Ashwell wedding photo

**RAETIHI WEDDING,** Sun (Auckland) 20 July 1929
**Bride Chooses a Distinctive Gown**
NATION—ASHWELL
A pretty wedding was celebrated in the Raetihi Methodist Church on Wednesday evening, when Florence, second daughter of Mr. and Mrs. A. W. Ashwell, was married to Lawrence, only son of Mrs. and the late Mr. C. C. Nation.
The Rev. Mr. Handy, of Marton officiated. The church had been decorated with flowers by friends of the bride. Mr. G. N. Parkes presided at the organ. The bride, who was given away by her father. looked charming in a frock of ivory chenille georgette and mariette over a pink satin bodice, made with a long and flounced skirt. Her veil of silk net embroidered in silver and cream, was arranged with a filet of orange blossom caught on each side with a spray of orange blossom. A shower bouquet was carried.
Miss Dorothy Ashwell, sister of the bride, was a bridesmaid, wearing a dainty frock of powder blue over blue satin. Streamers of velvet ribbons falling from the left shoulder down the back were caught with a diamante buckle. She also wore a silk tulle bandeau on her head.
Miss Joyce Urwin was also in attendance. She had on a pretty frock of rose shade mariette over blue satin, with fitted bodice and petalled skirt. She wore silk tulle on her head, caught on the left side.
There were two little train-bearers, Hope Ashwell and Pearl Nation, the former in an apple green crepe de chine frock and the later in mauve crepe de chine. On their heads they wore bandeaux or velvet ribbons with rosettes.
After the ceremony the reception was held at the Druids' Hall, where Mrs. Ashwell, who wore saxe wool crepe de chine with hat to tone, and Mrs Nation who had on mushroom mariette and silk lace with hat to match, received a large number of guests. The tables were beautifully decorated with white spring flowers.
The bride's traveling dress was cocoa. brown face cloth, with coat and hat to tone.
**Guest list**
Miss N. Anderson, Mr. and Mrs. N. R. Barrett, Mr. and Mrs. W. D. Barrett, Mr. and Mrs. Bergman, Mr. and Mrs. Comer, Mr. and Mrs. Ciochetto, Mr. and Mrs. and Miss Dobson, Mrs. Drury, Dr. and Mrs. Feltham, Mr. G. France, Mrs. W Gordon, Mr. and Mrs. Goldfinch, Mr. W Harris, Mrs. and Miss Henderson, Mr and Mrs. Honore, Mrs. Summers, Mr. and Mrs. Jack, Miss Keucke, Miss Levy, Mr Lucas, Mr. May, Mrs. Munro, Mr and Mrs W Munro, Mr. Mahony, Mr. and Mrs. Collins, Mr. Laing, Mrs. Fissenden, Mr. and Mrs. Pedersen, Mr. and Mrs. Burling, Mrs. Wyche, Mrs. P. G. Smith, Mr W. Waring, Mr. and Mrs. Mabbit, Mr. A. Miller, Miss R. Oliver, Mr. and Mrs. G. H. Parkes, Mrs. Perfect, Miss R. Parker, Mr. and Mrs. and Joyce Reynolds, Mr. and Mrs. Rieper, Mr. and Mrs. and Miss Sandford, Mr. and Mrs. and Miss Scarrow, Mr. and Mrs. F. Thompson, Mrs. Bert Towler, Mr. and Mrs. Urwin, Miss G. and Mr. Alf. Urwin, Mr. and Mrs. Wood (Ohakune), Mr. and Mrs. G. Wise, Mr. J. Plank, Miss Donaldson, Sister Rita.

5.5 Newspaper report of my mother and father's wedding

My grandmother wrote three very similar accounts of the wedding in her memoirs, but I think she found it difficult to write about my mother's death and largely avoided doing so. At the time of her death, my grandfather Walter Ashwell and my grandmother Harriet Ashwell had been living in Gisborne for over ten years.

I have only a vague memory of my mother, involving the two of us taking a board from one of the racks in the big bread delivery van and going down to the river behind the house, and using the board to make a bridge to cross from the bank of the river to a small island in the middle of the Mangateitei river, behind our house, which was just before the bridge out of Ohakune on the way to Raetihi. My memory of this is so vague that I am not sure whether it

was my mother or someone else. She was clearly a talented and beautiful person, as photographs of her show, but according to my sister she suffered from bipolar disease which meant that throughout her married life she suffered from depression. This often meant that she spent time away from Ohakune, in Wellington, Auckland and Wanganui. Her unhappy love affair with Fraser Scott must have been a major contributor, and there was a tendency for others to unfairly blame themselves for what they might have done but did not do to protect her.

She had had a hard life because of depression, often manifested in a complete lack of energy, so much so that at the worst times she could not even lift a teacup. Betty also suffered from the disease and felt sure it was inherited, perhaps going back at least to her grandfather Walter Ashwell.

Mum's early death meant that I was largely cared for by my father and sister and brothers. When my father died just over two years later when I was not quite eight, then Betty effectively became my mother, a role later shared with Audrey. The early death of my parents was tragic, but it did not seem to affect me greatly. I remember unexpectedly bursting into tears when I went next door to tell Mrs Mona White that Dad had died, and I also remember earlier rushing back home when I was playing near the bridge on Raetihi road in case the ambulance had brought my father home.

5.6 The Nation house after the 1942 flood

A couple of years before I was born, on 7 January 1942, Ohakune had a terrible flood. There had been a great deal of rain and the Mangateitei river had been blocked by fallen trees which

had acted as a dam. The water built up behind this natural dam, and with the heavy rain the dam could hold no longer and suddenly burst. The torrent of water rushed down the river, and fortunately when it hit the railway bridge just at the entrance to the town on the Rangataua Road, the water went in three directions – one to the left towards the Rochfort railway station near the football grounds, one down the river, and one to the right towards the District High School (now the Primary School). If this splitting had not occurred, the town would probably have been much more badly damaged. This happened at about 11 a.m. A log came through the window in the living room of our house, and Mum shouted "A hurricane. Save the kids!" She grabbed Peter and John (and perhaps Laurie John Ashwell who may have been staying at the time), and made her way through the flood and rain to the bakehouse, using a rope tied between the house and the bakehouse. When she got there, she realised that Betty was not with them. Betty was in fact asleep in the bedroom just off the living room (that is now an extension of the living room). Mum came back and got Betty who grabbed her much valued tennis racket to take with her.

The shed behind the house was lifted off its foundations and carried a few metres towards Raetihi Road where it was gently set down again. The shed had a lot of boxes of plates and dishes used for catering, and preserved fruit in glass jars, but this all remained unbroken still on the shelves.

Only one person was killed in a flood, Ole Olsen, who was drowned trying to untie his dogs so that they could save themselves. It was several days before his body was found.

This all happened before I was born, but quite a few years later, Uncle Bill Mahony who had been a skilled carpenter before losing his right arm in the First World War came to fix the sashes in the windows. When he took the surround boards off, he found quite a lot of dry dirt that was there as a result of the flood. Allan Nation found the same in the walls when the house was remodelled many years later.

I have a series of sixteen letters from my mother, who refers to herself as Florrie, to John Harold Lucas of Rings Road, Coromandel where he was County Clerk. The address on one of the letters was simply Harold Lucas, Coromandel. He was her uncle, married briefly to her mother's sister-in-law Nell Ashwell (Nell committed suicide after her return from her honeymoon in 1921). The first letter (to Mr Lucas) was received in France at Xmas 1918 and was written when Florrie was seven years old. It mentions that her sister Ruthie was not very well (Ruth died the following year aged four). The next letter is dated 29/9/42 when Florrie was 31 and had been married for 13 years. In the letters she writes of her children and her parents, brothers and sisters and their children. She also mentions the Ohakune flood and Mount Ruapehu erupting. I have transcribed them, and they are in a file called *Letters from Florrie Nation*. Here are comments about her children from the letters. [My comments are in square brackets]. The dates in brackets are when the letter was written.

Betty: My big daughter was home for three weeks holiday and went back again quite cheerfully. She brought home a good report from school (29/4/42). I have Betty home going to school here. The board in Auckland wasn't very satisfactory and considering all conditions

in the city, I think she is better down here. She is a help to me and is very studious and very much a child though growing very tall (7/6/43) [She was almost fifteen years old]. Betty spent days poring over her book [from Harold] and was very thrilled with it. Betty and John have been staying at a Govt. Farm during the holidays. John gets about 3 pound 12 shillings per week, which seems an enormous wage for such a small boy (12/1/44). Bet is growing up fast. She will soon be sixteen (23/8/44). Needless to say you pleased Betty exactly with her [book]. Have I told you she has made up her mind to be a teacher and is going to school in Wanganui? Betty was 16 last November – quite grown up. She has been up Ruapehu and Tongariro [mountains] so far this year. She is a real outdoor type (9/1/45). Betty was allowed home for a day to see [Ian and Willsford Spence]. She finishes up at the convent in three weeks. She will be a great help to her father. I will be able to send you a nice photo of Betty shortly. She has done very well at school this year (20/11/45). Betty is a great help to me (5/5/46).

John: John came second in his class (29/4/42). [John] is at an awkward age for presents and has most of the usual things. Anyway, Laurie and I were going to get him a toolbox with a lock and gradually fill it for him, as he is rather good at wood-work at school (7/6/43). John stayed home [from Wanganui] to do Uncle Bill's paper round as well as his own, as Uncle Bill is ill with shingles (6/9/43). John is being initiated into the mysteries of Algebra and Geometry and can now sing "God save the King" in French. Some accomplishment!! I wonder how many French men in France at present would be glad to do the same! John has been blackberrying every night lately. He is such a "sticker" at any job he tackles. He has picked 60lbs for different friends and relatives. At present he is in the bakehouse cooking gingernuts. He is a great little help to his father (29/2/44). Our John is a real tiger for work and is happiest when going for his life in the bakehouse or woodpile (23/8/44). They all did well in their exams. John came in top of the boys in Form 3 but let a couple of girls beat him! John continues to be his father's right hand and is a little wonder around the place. He is at present in Opunake (9/1/45). John is the proud father of 100 6-week old chicks. As you can well imagine they are properly looked after (4/9/45).

Peter: Peter tags along somewhere in the middle [at school]. He hasn't the stamina of the others (29/4/42). Bet and Pete have both started their music, so the piano gets a good thrashing (29/2/44). Peter did well and passed into Standard 5. He is going to "Tec" when he passes the 6th as he is good with his hands and wants to take an engineering course. Peter is coming home today from a fortnight in Wanganui [probably staying with Bill and Alma Ashwell] (9/1/45). Peter is going to a YMCA camp at Kai Iwi beach for two weeks at Xmas. This should do him a lot of good (20/11/45). Many thanks for the gifts at Xmas time and also the stamps the other day. Peter was very pleased indeed. He is saving some for you (5/5/46). We are all well with the exception of Peter who has mumps. I am hoping Paul will miss (4/6/46).

Paul: We have told no-one but Patricia (?) Nation is due on your and John's birthday [15 May]. We are very pleased about it as our youngest (Peter) was 10 yesterday (12/1/44). [I turned out to be Paul and not Patricia, but Peter made sure that we eventually had a Patricia in the family by marrying Patricia Tozer]. Baby Paul is thriving well and is good. He is just at a

lovely age, all smiles and talk. He was a bit premature – his actual birthday being 28 April (23/8/44). Paul continues to thrive well and is a darling, smiling, brown fat baby as good as the day is long (9/1/45). Paul is so wonderfully good (20/3/45). Paul is his usual self again and has a lovely time going with Betty in the baker's van (4/9/45). Paul is thriving. He has been in for swims right up to his neck in the water and at present is having a great game in a heap of sand Mr Murdie has brought (20/11/45). I am off to Auckland with Paul to stay with Jean [Gardiner] for a few weeks. Paul is very well. He is a real boy now. He had his first hair-cut and is into real boys' pants now (5/5/46).

There is also a letter, kindly passed on to me by my cousin George Skuse, from my mother to her mother which mentions my birthday. "Paul had a cake with a Daddy, Mummy and little Paul snowman figures on it and he thought it was great. He had it down on the table to look at it and when I was scrubbing the steps I could hear him softly singing "Happy Birthday to me. Happy Birthday to me". The letter has two big crosses on it drawn by me. I guess I was two or three years old. The letter also mentions my mother looking for a book for me ("He is a great one for books and knows a lot of things off by heart."), and my enjoyment of *Nanny let my beetle out*, an A. A. Milne poem I still vaguely remember.

There are newspaper clippings of my mother's death and the coroner's inquiry.

## CORONER COMMENDS MEN WHO HELPED POLICE FIND BODY

Two brothers who helped police recover a body from the banks of the Wanganui River on Christmas Day received commendation from the district coroner, Mr S. M. Dixon, JP, and Police Sergeant J. Carlyon when the inquest was concluded yesterday.

When evidence of the finding of the body and its removal had been heard, Sergeant Carlyon had this to say: "The police do appreciate the splendid assistance these men gave in the recovery of the body under very difficult circumstances. They are worthy of special commendation for going out of their way in this manner."

Mr Dixon: "I know how disagreeable this work is. Of course, it is really only the duty of citizens to assist the police, but in this case the men concerned should be very highly commended."

Mr J. D. Tizard, solicitor who was present in relatives' interests, commented that little public notice was generally taken of the hard, dirty jobs tackled by the police and treated as a matter of routine.

Mr Dixon: "I know that they have some abominable jobs. The public take it all for granted and the police do it all as part of their beat."

He added that he felt particularly sympathetic for three people in such instances, the policeman whose duty it was to recover a body, a relative who had to identify it, and the doctor who had to examine it.

## Missing Over Fortnight

A verdict that Mrs Florence Forde Nation met her death by drowning in the Wanganui River on or about December 7 last was returned by Mr S. M. Dixon, JP, district coroner, when he concluded the inquest yesterday.

Mrs Nation's body had been recovered on the riverbank more than a fortnight after she went missing, the court was told.

Mr Dixon found that there was no evidence to show how deceased came to be in the water. Dr D. W. McGregor said the condition of the body was consistent with Mrs Nation having been drowned.

## Body Of Missing Woman Discovered On Putiki Beach

The body of Mrs. Florence Forde Nation was discovered on the bank of the Wanganui River at Putiki, on Christmas Eve. Mrs. Nation was a former resident of Ohakune and had been missing from the home of her brother in Pitt Street, Wanganui.

Mrs. Nation, who had been in ill health for some years, informed her brother on December 7 that she was going to Woodville to visit some relations. On not hearing from her, her brother notified the police on December 23, and inquiries were started.

In the absence of the city coroner, an inquest for identification purposes was opened before Mr. S. S. Pretson, S.M., and adjourned sine die.

**DEATHS**

NATION—On December 25, 1949, at Wanganui, Florence Forde, dearly beloved wife of Lawrence Watty Nation, of Ohakune, in her 39th year. Private cremation yesterday (Monday, December 26).—Fleming and Dick.

5.7 Newspaper accounts of my mother's death

**My father**

| Lawrence Wattie Nusworth Monro (sic) born 12 December 1899<br>Lawrence Watty Nation (misspelt Wattie on Death certificate) | Age |
|---|---|
| Step-father Johann Ludwig Christian Siggelkow died 7 March 1909 | 9 |
| Lawrence's mother Sarah Ann married Charles Cecil Nation 1 June 1913 | 13 |
| Step-sister Violet Pearl Nation born 20 January 1920 | 20 |
| Step-father Charles Cecil Nation died 28 November 1928 | 28 |
| First child Elizabeth Elsie Nation 29 November 1928 (adopted) | 28 |
| Married Florence Forde Ashwell 10 July 1929 | 29 |
| Member of Ohakune Borough Council 1929 | 29 |
| Second child John Lawrence Nation 15 May 1930 | 30 |
| Third child Rosemary Ann Nation 1931 | 31 |
| Rosemary Ann died 23 September 1932 of influenzal meningitis | 32 |
| Elected Mayor of Ohakune 1933 | 33 |
| Fourth child Peter Joseph Nation 11 January 1934 | 34 |
| Fifth child Ian Stephen Paul Nation 28 April 1944 | 44 |
| Florence Forde Nation died some time before 25 December 1949 | 49 |
| Died 14 March 1952 | 52 |

5.8 The youngest photo of my father Lawrence Nation, then Lawrence Sigglekow

My father's age corresponded to the years. He was born on 12 December 1899 so at the beginning of 1901 he was one year old. His birth certificate bears the name Lawrence Wattie Nusworth Monro. Wattie should have been spelled as Watty, and Monro as Munro. During

his life he had three different surnames – Munro, Siggelkow, and Nation – and none of them indicated his father.

It seems likely he moved to Ohakune in June 1913 when his mother married C. C. Nation. He was 13 years old then.

The newspaper, *The Ohakune Times*, was originally located in Church Street (now called Moore Street). It may have had some connection with Bill Mahony's (my mother's uncle) shop in Clyde Street which sold books, comics and stationery, as well as fishing equipment located opposite the Memorial gates on Clyde Street next to the alley by Buck's Drapery, and next to Clancy's grocery store. Today Norling's home appliance shop covers that area. I do not remember Bill Mahony's shop when it was operating, but I remember being part of a group including the Walters and Dixon children who broke into it and who were kicked out by Bill Mahony.

5.9 L. W. Nation wedding photo

C. C. Nation's obituary in *The Wanganui Chronicle* (Volume 71, Issue 265 1 December 1928, page 6) states that he came to Ohakune in 1911 and bought *The Ohakune Times* in 1914 [from P. J. Dunne] and *The Waimarino County Call* in 1918. It seems likely my father took over the running of *The Ohakune Times* after the purchase of *The Waimarino County Call*. *The Ohakune Times* operated until at least 1948. C. C. Nation died in 1928, and it is likely that my father had taken over the running of both papers before then. He continued to live in Ohakune and went to Raetihi by motorbike and later by car, and used to have lunch with his mother in Raetihi each working day. Both *The Ohakune Times* and *The Waimarino County Call* were printed in Raetihi. There are copies of both papers in the National Library of New Zealand in Wellington.

My father died in Wanganui Hospital on the 14 March 1952 as a result of complications from an operation to deal with ulcers. I was only seven when he died and so have very few memories of him. Those memories include him sitting at the table in the small kitchen of the house in Clyde Street Ohakune while he ate a scone spread with the blackcurrant jelly, which he loved, that his mother (Nanny Waring) had made for him. I also remember going to the shop in Rangataua that he owned to open it on a Saturday afternoon while the regular shopkeepers Leighton (Leat) and Maggie Taylor had their days off. The shop was part of the Rangataua Hall building on the left hand side as you faced it. The shop on that side was basically a dairy selling cigarettes (De Reske, Island Queen, Craven A), sweets etc. He also owned the shop on the other side of the hall which sold comics which I remember and several other things I don't. The shop may have been bought from his father-in-law, Walter Ashwell, when they went bankrupt in 1937 and moved to Gisborne.

My father seemed to have a talent for starting businesses or inheriting them. These included the printing business at Raetihi, the Raetihi carrying company, the Rangataua shops, and the bakehouse and its small outlet next to the picture theatre in Ohakune. I was told the bakehouse was set up for Colin and Stan Thomas (Colin Thomas and family lived in the house on the corner of Clyde and Arawa Streets, where eventually the Willcoxes lived after moving from Burns Street). Stan did the baking and Colin did the deliveries. My father provided the money, and I guess the land for the bakehouse. The Thomas boys were very popular in the community and naming the bakehouse after them was likely to help business. I don't know how long the Thomases lasted in the business, but it seems my father had to take it over. He kept the name, Thomas Bakery. The takeover must have been a friendly one because both Thomas families remained close friends of our family, with Stan's wife, Puss, being especially close to Betty. Puss was the first to work in the tiny shop next to the Ohakune picture theatre (on the right when facing the theatre) where the bread and cakes were sold, and worked there for a couple of years. Puss's real name was Ida which she did not like and never used. The bakehouse was set up in 1939 at the beginning of the second world war (It is advertised in *The Ohakune Times*), and in 2014 for a week Allan and Steve celebrated the 75$^{th}$ anniversary by selling eclairs and cakes normally costing $1-80 for 75 cents. They sold several thousand over the few days.

5.10 Chocolate eclairs from Johnny's shop

The bakehouse had contracts with the army at Waiouru, and these were very profitable. Mick Dillon at one time drove a delivery van for the bakehouse. He told me that he was almost responsible for my death. I was in the delivery van going up to Ohakune Junction and I leaned against the door. The latch on the door was faulty, and I fell out of the moving van on to the road. I still have a memory of it and think it happened very near where Steve Nation now lives. I remember being lain down on the couch in our living room while I recovered, though I did not remember Mick being involved.

5.11 Laurie and Flo

My father was mayor of Ohakune for two terms, a Justice of the Peace, the secretary of the Masonic Lodge, a borough councillor, president of the brass band, and a member of the Ohakune Volunteer Fire Brigade. The family is proud of the fact that three generations of the Nation family have so far served in the Fire Brigade, my father, my brother Johnny, and his sons Allan and Steve, most of them with long service medals.

5.12 My father in later life

Most of the businesses that my father set up involved taking out loans and mortgages, and when he was in a hospital, he was worried that Betty and Johnny in particular would be burdened by these mortgages if they took over the businesses. Johnny took over the bakehouse, the shop by the theatre, and the Rangataua store. Betty and Rex took over the Raetihi Carrying Company, on the west side of the Raetihi picture theatre.

When my father died, Rex was given the job of telling me. I think Betty must have been too distraught. He came into my bedroom and said that I didn't have to go to school today, because my father had died. He then asked me if I understood. I replied no, meaning that I didn't understand why that meant I didn't have to go to school. So, he explained again that my father had died.

I don't remember it affecting me greatly, largely I guess because of the resilience of youth with little view to the future, and the fact that I had not seen him for what seemed like several months. I only remember having a happy childhood, largely because of the loving care of my sister and brothers and their families, and because of my own generally optimistic view of life.

In his obituary it said he attended school in Ohakune from the age of five, but that is not likely to be correct as he was still in Levin then and part of the Siggelkow family. He probably went to Ohakune at the age of 12 or so after Nanny married Charlie Nation.

## Chapter 6 Betty and Rex

I was ten years younger than my next brother Peter and sixteen years younger than Betty, the eldest of the family. I was five when my mother died, so Betty and John had the responsibility of looking after me, especially when my father died a few years later when I was not quite eight.

6.1 Peter & Pat, John & Audrey, Betty & Rex, Paul & Nitha at Palmerston North in 1998

**Betty and Rex Bryers**

| Elizabeth (Betty) Elsie Nation<br>E. E. Bryers<br>Heeni Bryers<br>E. E. Ingham | Age |
|---|---|
| Born 29 November 1928 | |
| Mother died in December 1948 | 20 |
| Married Rex Bryers 27 January 1951 | 22 |
| Birth of 1st child Grant Frederick 22 March 1953 | 24 |
| Birth of 2nd child Susan Francis 2 December 1954 | 26 |
| Treatment for tuberculosis 1955 | 26 |
| Birth of 3rd child Ross Malcolm 27 March 1956 | 27 |
| Rex Bryers died 22 February 2004 | 75 |
| Married Jack Ingham 28 August 2004 | 75 |
| Jack Ingham died 19 December 2008 | 80 |
| Betty Bryers-Ingham died 25 January 2017 | 88 |

6.2 Betty at the Waring house in Raetihi around 1929

6.3 Elizabeth Elsie Nation (Betty)

One of my earliest memories of my sister Betty was when she was trying to help me learn to read. I had probably only been at school a few weeks and had brought home my reading book, Janet and John. I was reading a story about a bird, and there was the sentence "It flew away". Because the capital I in “It” had serifs on the top, I was convinced that it should be pronounced “t” and that “It” should be pronounced “Tit”, and nothing could convince me otherwise. Betty was both highly amused and horrified that I would be going back to school pronouncing the word this way.

Another strong early memory is of her playing the piano in the living room of the house in Ohakune. She was so good at it.

Betty was born on 29 November 1928. Although her biological father was Fraser Scott, that made no difference to her being part of the family. It was never a great secret, and although she sometimes referred to herself as being adopted, it seemed a non-issue to me and my brothers. We were brothers and sister, end of story.

The background to Betty’s birth is described in our grandmother’s book, *My Life* by Harriet Ashwell (see Chapter 22). My mother, Flo had finished school in Wanganui and went to work in her parent’s shop in Raetihi. When it was known that she was pregnant, it seemed that marrying Fraser Scott was either not considered as an option or he did not offer to marry her. To Nanny Ashwell’s great relief, my father offered to marry Flo and adopt the child. The wedding took place on 10 July 1929, seven months after Betty was born. Some kind of pretence was carried out with Betty being born in Wellington that probably fooled no one, but appearances were maintained. Here is a small section from our grandmother’s book. “When

Betty was born, through a nurse friend of ours, there was a temporary home for her in Nelson, and to this place Florrie went till Betty was brought home as a young relative of Laurie's mother, before Florrie herself came home to prepare for her wedding."

6.4 Betty holding John Nation 1930

**Betty on Nanny Ashwell**

At the beginning of 2001, Betty wrote a letter to George Skuse after reading the hand-written version of Nanny Ashwell's memoirs (*My Life* by Harriet Ashwell) that George had sent to her. Betty had described the book to me as "The world according to Nanny Ashwell" and wanted to set the record straight. The following text is written by Betty. I have incorporated details from another shorter account she wrote about her childhood. There was a lot of overlap between the two accounts.

"[Nanny Ashwell] was totally wrong when she spoke of Mum having an enjoyable social life at 18 as mayoress. Dad [Laurie Nation] didn't become mayor until 1934. By that time, at 21 years old, Mum had three children one of which was Rosemary who died of meningitis at 11 months. Peter number 4 was born on the 11th of January 1934, a very sickly child who spent the first six weeks of his life at the Karitane hospital. Mum in the depression years had gone without food so that we children had enough. Dad didn't realise this, as he had his main meal at midday at his mother's in Raetihi where he worked as editor of the local paper. So, the evening meal at home was a light meal. I believe because of Mum's health being poor from lack of nourishment, this contributed to Rosemary and Peter being born with poor immune systems and health. When she arrived after marriage to our house at Ohakune, she was made to feel very unhappy. Being the mother of a child before marriage, she was talked about. An Irish woman who was a neighbour was a loudmouth ignorant person whose comments within

Mum's hearing made Mum’s life hell. It was not until John was born, when the new neighbours came to live next door, did Mum’s existence become tolerable. This woman neighbour, at least 20 years older than Mum, had no family. Mrs. Binning was the one person who brought back some sunshine into life for Mum. She treated Mum as a daughter and us children as grandchildren. She was someone Mum could confide in who listened and understood what a bleak life Mum had. There was no fun or outings of any sort, just motherhood without relief.

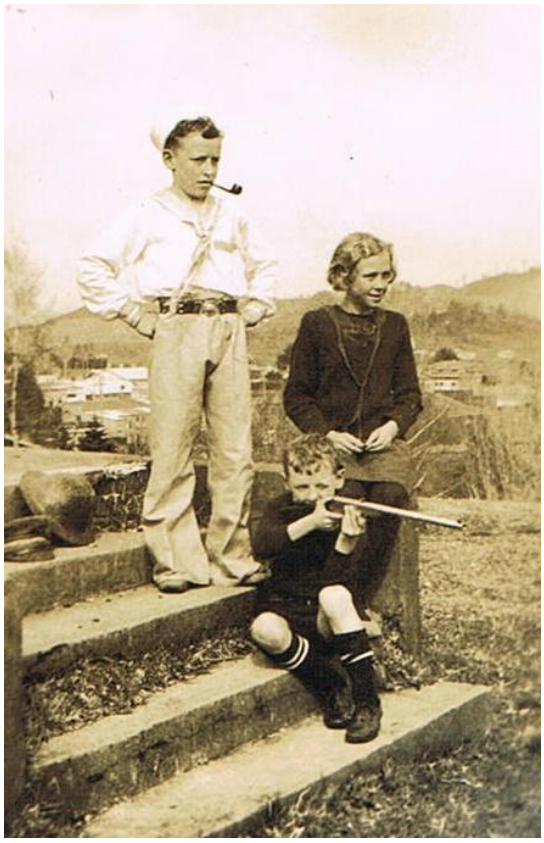
“I think that Nanny Ashwell liked to believe that Mum’s life was better than it really was, in order to rest her conscience in forcing Mum into a marriage with a man she did not love when there was an alternative, as my paternal grandmother provided seriously for us. She was wealthy with vast Maori land. Nanny also writes about one of Mum’s breakdowns when she arrived at Gisborne. She spoke of a Gisborne doctor suggesting Mum having a stay in hospital. This doctor also asked if there was another man in Mum’s life, as breakdowns of this sort often were caused by this factor. Nanny said that the doctor was reassured when Mum appeared to welcome Dad's visit. There was only one man in Mum’s heart, my father [Fraser Scott], although she respected Dad, she never loved him. Nanny went on to say how Dad took Mum to Wellington to seek help from a recommended doctor. She did add that on that Wellington visit Mum had an attempt at suicide from a bridge, which was prevented by a stranger who realised what she was intending. Nevertheless, our lives as children were happy. We never heard any arguments or signs of discord between our parents. The times when we were looked after by different helpers when Mum was sick (depressed), we accepted as the norm. It wasn't until I had a breakdown caused by intolerable stress, the cause over which I had no control, that I finally understood how much my mother had suffered over the years. Dad was a good kind generous man, and I suppose most women would have been happy to have him as a husband, but Mum was not the average woman. She was a lot like Hope [Ashwell], a giver not a taker. She was very bright, witty, compassionate, and an excellent musician. Any tasks she took on, she put her heart and soul into it, be it cooking, sewing or any other skills needed to make a house a home. I intend to cover Mum's life in my own memoirs with a closer look at some possible aspects seen in a different light from that of Nanny Ashwell’s.

“As a small child, I spent quite a lot of time with Nanny and Grandpa when John, Rosemary and Peter were born. Because of the length of time of Peter being hospitalised, I also at that time spent months with them. During a period when Mum was ill about 1935, I spent time at school in Raetihi. When we were older, John and I used to travel to Raetihi on the old Indian motorbike Dad used for travel each day between Ohakune and Raetihi. John sat on the cushion in front, and I sat on the carrier at the back. Quite exciting! We also spent a fair bit of time at Nanny Waring’s. The main attraction at Nanny Waring’s was that she was a superb cook, and made all sorts of treats for us. Whereas Nanny Ashwell’s warrenlike living quarters and shop, where there were no passageways just rooms opening into other rooms, and upstairs and a huge attic, was a fascination.


6.5 Ashwell’s shop (with the car in front) in Seddon Street, Raetihi around 1927

“The huge shop had a side counter along the right hand side wall, and the shop had books, jewellery and crockery mostly in the more expensive range. Newspapers and magazines were also sold. Upstairs was used as a showroom for toys, and I can still recall the particular smell associated with celluloid dolls, a very light material which was very inflammable and later a ban was put on its use. There were celluloid dolls, animals, Disney-like animals and every type of toy, pedal cars, etc., soft toys, mechanical. It was a child's wonderland. Downstairs and upstairs were built to a peculiar pattern, no passageways as such. One room opened onto another. Raetihi had sewage and electricity very early, but upstairs it was the chamber pot.

“As well as the shop, there was the fun of having aunts and uncles making a fuss of us.



6.6 Roy, Hope, and Laurie Ashwell

“Laurie John Ashwell was only three years older than me, and we spent quite a lot of time together as he enjoyed being an uncle, and I was allowed to tag along with him and his mates. We enjoyed sledge riding on the small hill slopes at Raetihi in winter and being pushed around in trolleys in the summer. Tin boats were made of galvanised iron in order to paddle down the Makotuku River at Raetihi. Every now and again when we were becoming a nuisance to the household, a lunch was made-up for us. And we were sent on a picnic expedition to the water reservoir high on the hills behind Raetihi. This kept us out of everyone’s hair for at least three hours or more.

“Roy [Ashwell] like Laurie John was a very orderly person. All his comic books were kept in a strict order, and all his possessions were kept neat and tidy. Roy was always keen on the Navy, and I was honoured by one night being let sleep in the hammock he had set up in his room. I looked up to Roy and Hope and was treated as a part of their family. Hope was only seven years older, and she was ill a lot in early life due to neglect. Laurie was rescued by his older sister, my aunt Dorothy, who took him on her teaching jobs. Nanny was not a good practical mother. She left her domestics to her paid servants and indulged herself in civic duties. She was chairperson of the school committee and very much involved in church administration, etc. She had considerable Irish charm and was adept at getting her own way. She was a zealous worker, but only towards the things she was interested in, and the whole family felt her neglect, either through a poor diet or not noticing serious illness.

“Grandpa was my mate. He was a watchmaker and jeweller and had done his apprenticeship in the Ashwell firm (apparently still operating in England). At times he got into a mess by not having a watch fixed on time, and he would lend someone else’s watch out that was fixed until he fixed the original.

“Grandpa loved reading the classics and his favourite writer was Rudyard Kipling. Grandpa bought a shop in Rangataua, a small settlement out of Ohakune. It was a country store stocking all types of goods. I used to travel with him in his car to the Rangataua shop about 10 miles from Raetihi, and three miles south of Ohakune, and I listened to him singing. Two of the songs I know off by heart still were *Springtime in the Rockies* and *When I grow too old to dream*. He always seemed to be in a world of his own, but I always felt his love. Once I was barefoot playing over by the Rangataua railway station opposite the shops when I got a nail in my foot. I wouldn't let Grandpa pull it out. It had to be Mum.

“Grandpa used to hum to himself when working in his workshop. I used to shower him with questions, and he was very patient with me, answering my questions as simply as he could. He slept downstairs and I used to sleep downstairs with him. Grandpa's bed was parallel to the wall and mine was with the head of my bed at the foot end of his bed along the same wall. I remember hearing the rustle of a paper bag as he read and ate his favourite lollies, blackballs.

“Grandpa had periods where he as a businessman was involved very constructively in the running of the town.

“Nanny Ashwell I can remember often had to go to bed in a darkened room because of migraine headaches which seemed to occur frequently. Most days Nanny made time to read Bible stories and A. A. Milne’s poetry to me. My favourite poems were there *The little black hen* and *Good bear and bad bear*. Nanny read very well, and I enjoyed this time spent with her immensely. Mum used to read to us children also and with a chapter a night of some adventure stories like *Children of the New Forest*. I couldn't stand the not knowing what happened next and would read on myself.

“Children that have experienced the attention and love from grandparents know the strength of that special relationship. As a child, I had a strong religious upbringing. It began with going to the Methodist Church at Raetihi, when I was about four. Church afforded the greatest part of social life in Raetihi as indeed in most small towns. I can't say I enjoyed it, but accepted it as part of life.

“At Ohakune, there was no Methodist Church, so John and I went to the Presbyterian Sunday school, until Mum joined the Anglican church where we all went as a family unit. Mum played the organ and ran the choir. I was confirmed as a fully-fledged Anglican at 12 years of age.

“Nanny and Grandpa shifted to Gisborne, and I visited once to Mangapapa. Nanny when writing always addressed me as “best beloved”. She came to look after us when I was about 10 or 11. It was towards the end of the year. John and I were sitting exams at school. Because

of this, Nanny gave us the choice of whatever we wanted for breakfast to start the day off well.

“Nanny Ashwell was not a cuddling person as was Nanny Waring, But she showed she loved us in many other ways. She was not a person I could open up to, as I felt I would not come up to her high expectations of me. I wasn't ambitious. Years later when I told her that Rex and I were intending to marry, she warned me the Bryers men were drinkers and gamblers, two of the sins that rated worst in her estimation. This warning was true to a certain extent, but I had not experienced drink used other than the occasional beer Dad had and enjoyed.

“The Bryers men may have been drinkers etc. but they were also witty, charming, educated and above all well-mannered. They also excelled in sport, the last mentioned played a big part in my social life.

“A few years later Nanny came to stay with us. I was a bit apprehensive at Rex’s coming home from the club and meeting with Nanny’s disapproval. As it happened, when he came home, he and Nanny talked of all the hard case characters who lived in Raetihi in the early years of prohibition (and there were many of them).

“Nanny was laughing and enjoying the conversation which brought back many memories of that era. Nanny talked of a special bond between her brother [Bill Mahony] and herself. There is no doubt in my mind as to who rated most highly of his [Bill Mahony’s] sisters. Haddie [Harriet] was special.

“Aunty Molly was my favourite great aunt although I liked them all. We corresponded regularly for decades. She always had a twinkle in her eye and was also very kind to my Mum. When kindness and love were needed, she got both from Aunty Molly. I was amused when Aunt Molly wrote to me after I had told her of the birth of our grandson, our first grandchild. She began her letter, “My dear girl, I can't imagine you being a grandmother”. This was the end of 1977, December the 15th. I was 49, so I wasn't a young grandmother, but being the eldest great grandchild of the Mahony's made Auntie Molly, their youngest child, a young great-great-great-aunt.

“I think Nanny Ashwell was a very strong person. I think she was what people speak of as “typical Irish” in that she was charming and thus got her own way, was bigoted but was able to convince herself that she wasn't, was a bit of a romancer in that she could obtain peace of mind by seeing things in a light that was palatable to herself.

“She got her real strength from her Christian beliefs which I saw sustained her through the many sorrows she had to endure. In this respect I agree with Karl Marx who said, “Religion is the opium of the people” (But so what if it has the desired effect). I think that both Nanny and Grandpa Ashwell did well with their lives, beset with their inherited genes and the era in which they lived. They <u>both</u> won my love and respect.”

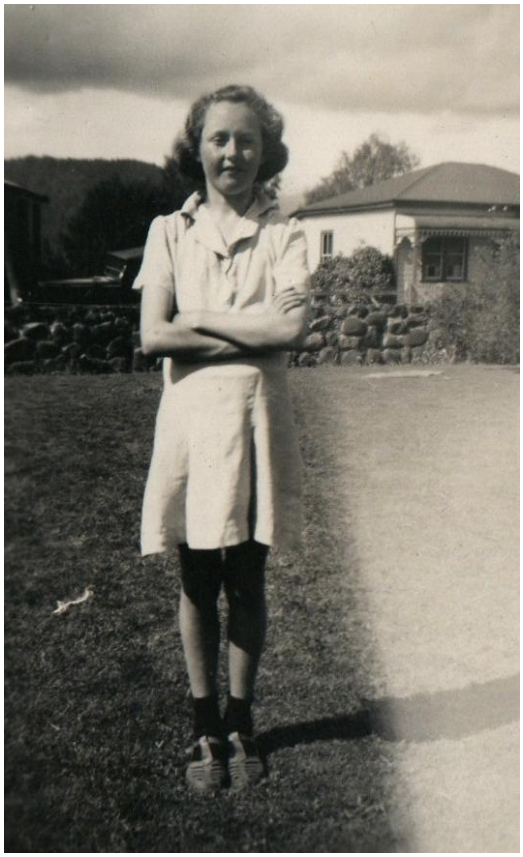
As a child Betty was keen at sports and was happier competing with boys. She was something of a tomboy and was a very good swimmer and an excellent tennis player. In much later life we visited Roy Skuse’s house in Gisborne which had a grass tennis court. We

had a couple of hits, and this got Betty interested in playing again. When she got back to Raetihi, she played a few games and badly sprained her ankle, which meant the end to a promising comeback to tennis in her seventies.

6.7 John, Betty and Flo in Ohakune around 1931

She went to Ohakune Primary School when Joey Blyth was headmaster. She was a bit afraid of him, but thought he was a good teacher.

She learned to play the piano, largely by ear. She had a couple of lessons from the nuns in her teenage years, but she walked out as soon as she was whacked with a ruler. They had already paid the year's fee, so it was a bit of a waste, but Betty was not going to take getting whacked. Our parents did not physically punish us. She went to Auckland Girls Grammar for two years when Mum went up there for a break, Ohakune District High for one year, and Sacred Heart College in Wanganui for one year. When she left Sacred Heart in 1945 at the age of 17, she did bread deliveries for the bakehouse, and I occasionally went with her.



6.8 Betty

Betty recalls that when I was born, she was sixteen years old and was sleeping in a tent out on the lawn at the back of the house because of lung trouble. She did that for several months. The cold air (the equivalent of a rest cure in Switzerland) was supposed to be good for lung trouble, even though the sides of the tent often froze. My father called out to her, "You've got another brother." To which Betty replied “Whoopee!”.

Betty and John were responsible for choosing my name. Ian came from Ian Spence, a much loved cousin, serving overseas in the Second World War on the Achilles. Stephen came from Uncle Bill Waring (his second name), and Paul was insisted on by Betty and John. Fortunately, they had the foresight not to put Paul as my first name, as that would have given me very unfortunate initials.

Betty said that Dad’s funeral was the only one she cried at. She regretted some of the things she had said to him, such as “When I am 16, I am going to call you Laurie not Dad.”


6.9 Betty 3rd from left in front row, Ohakune District High School Standards 3 and 4 1939

Betty's husband Rex was born in Raetihi on 11 February 1923. He went to Raetihi primary school and did well at his studies and even better at his rugby, getting into the Rangitikei Reps (the ultimate combined primary school rugby team in our area). He went to Ohakune District High School for two years and was considered to be the best back in the football team. He joined the railways as a cadet after his fourth form year and worked at Ohakune Junction for a few years.

6.10 Gil, Norrie, Rex Bryers

When World War Two broke out, at the age of 19, he joined the air force and was trained in Canada as a radio operator on a Sunderland flying boat. He served in Scotland, England, Ireland, West Africa, East Africa, and after the war ended, in Hong Kong and Singapore to help get the economies of these countries going. He got back to New Zealand in 1946 and didn't want to go back to the railway, even though there was a job there for him. He was rather restless and did wood cutting with the Haitanas, worked at the mill, and worked for the county council.

6.11 Rex Bryers

He married Betty on 27 January 1951 in the registry office in Auckland. She married him not only because he was good looking, but because he was a good rugby player and a good dancer, and he had a good sense of humour. Like most of the Bryers family, he was well liked. Together Rex and Betty ran the Raetihi Carrying Company. This was a tough business, involving long hours and trips up and down the winding road of the Parapara to Wanganui, not to mention the narrow unsealed back roads to the farms. They were the first carrying business in Raetihi to use convertible crates which could be used for sheep or cattle. They were also the first to use truck and trailer rigs, and diesel trucks. Rex was not the only driver and worked along with Eddie Barrett, Dick Carmichael, Toby Clode, and Tracker Herewini.

After my father died, and John and Audrey were thinking of getting married, Betty and Rex and I moved from out of the house in Ohakune next to the bakehouse to live in a small one-room building in Raetihi behind the Waimarino Hotel, where Rex’s father lived and where his cousin Joe (a primary school teacher) and his wife Doody (Judith) ran the hotel. It was around the beginning of 1953, just before Grant was born. The hotel is no longer there and was on the south side of Seddon Street about where the medical centre now is.

There is a photo of Betty in the 1951 Raetihi women's seven-a-side rugby team, though I have no memory of seeing her play.

At this time, their house on the corner of Ward and King Street was being built. The building took a year or so as the builder (old Mr Sandford) was working on another house at the same time and was giving more time to that. The room that the three of us lived in was attached to a wash house and toilet, and contained a double bed and a single bed. I remember we were so cramped for space that Betty bought a set of three green triangular pots that fitted together to make a circle which could fit on the small single element cooker above an oven. While we lived there, Grant was born and so there were four of us in the small room. Sometimes we ate a meal in the hotel, sitting like guests in the dining room. The hotel fascinated me. In the kitchen there was hard-working Doody (Judith – Joe's wife), Aunty Lade (Adelaide - a keen follower of the horses), and Sulla and Emma (who served in the dining room). One day Emma came in from the dining room with an order, and shouted out "Bacon and eggs – one". Aunty Lade, with her mind on the horses, screamed back "What was second? What was second?"

The hotel with its corridors, stairs, hidden tool room under the stairs, and with Joe Bryers' kids and Lance McKay next door meant there was always something to do.

Eventually the house was built, and we moved in there.

Rex played for the Raetihi football club. There was no Returned Servicemen's Club (RSA) in Raetihi after the war and a group including Rex got together to ask the World War one soldiers if it was okay to start up a club. Eddie Barrett, Cyril Larson and many others donated timber, materials and labour and set up what became a thriving club. It was located in Seddon Street, across the road from the present Raetihi Hotel.

Rex wasn't afraid of work and started up a stone crushing unit, of which his kids have fond and not so fond memories.

The carrying company was situated in a long building that fronted on to Seddon Street (opposite Duggan's tea rooms), had a side extension which opened on to Ward Street, and had an entrance at the back from which you could drive past the house to get to King Street. The office was a small room just to the left as you came in the Seddon Street entrance, and there was a toilet to the right. There was also a room up some stairs in the building and for a short time someone from out in the country stayed there – a bit of a recluse. Inside the building there were sacks of various kinds of fertiliser stored for the farmers until they were ready to have them delivered for top dressing. I think I also recall bales of wool being stored there for later delivery to the wool merchants. It was a great place to play leaping around the sacks of basic slag and superphosphate. The crates for carrying sheep and cattle were stored up on 44 gallon drums at the back. A truck could back in under the crate which was then lowered with the help of jacks on to the back of the truck. The drivers including Rex were fairly hard drinkers, and the Upokongaro pub (the Avoca Hotel) just outside of Wanganui was a frequent stopping place. Also popular was the 31 mile public works camp on the Parapara road (where Uncle Bill Ashwell had once worked). The drivers brought in the beer for the camp and

helped them drink some of it. Keeping the carrying company running was a battle between getting the farmers to pay, keeping the trucks in good repair and on the roads, and keeping the drivers in line.

Betty and Rex also did the rural mail run down the Ruatiti and Mangaparoa in a Morris 1000 car with a trailer on the back. It was a great reliable little car.

Rex liked his booze, but it was largely limited to Friday and Saturday nights. Betty used to cook his favourite bacon and egg pie on Friday night to tempt him home from the pub. This kind of drinking was very much part of the local culture, and it had the effect of discouraging his kids from drinking much when they were older. The kids were wary of him when he had been drinking, but he was never violent towards them.

One of his great assets was his fair-mindedness and his willingness to let others have a go at what they were interested in doing. As soon as their feet could reach the pedals, they were in the trucks and the front-end loader. What they did was not always to Rex's satisfaction, but they could have a go.

Rex had a great sense of humour and was a great storyteller. Some of my favourites were "Where's my boots?", and "It's woman's work, Rex".

He was a keen pig hunter and had his own dogs. Bill Hussey who worked in the post office in Raetihi, was one of his long-time pig hunting companions. One day the two of them wanted to go fishing in the Maori lake, so they hopped in the car and drove over to meet up with someone who could show them where to fish. The old Maori guy they met was not that keen on taking them out fishing. They talked and talked but seemed unable to convince him to take them out. Bill Hussey got impatient with this, and went out to the car and pulled out the wild pig that they had shot a day or so before, came into the house and slammed it down on the table. The old Maori guy took one look at it, his eyes open wide, and said "Where's my boots?"

Rex took me pig-hunting once, down the Ruatiti which is very hilly. Usually, Rex would get one pig for each bullet he shot. This day the dogs bailed up one pig and Rex shot that at point blank range. We started back with that pig while the dogs disappeared after another one. We heard something snuffling up the hill towards us and Rex sent me up a tree while he got ready to shoot. The pig appeared and Rex shot it. The two of them were too heavy for Rex to carry so he cut the head off one of them and gutted it. He tied each front leg to a back leg and put it on my back like a backpack. Unfortunately, he did not cut the tail off and that kept flicking blood all over the backs of my legs like a windscreen wiper. We struggled back to the car with the pigs, leaving the dogs to be picked up later. Betty almost had a heart attack when she saw me as I was covered in blood from top to bottom. I never went pig-hunting again. Rex used to go hunting often and we ate a lot of wild pork.

Rex was a master of the one-liner comment. One day, Ross rushed home all excited having seen a cat scratch a big dog sending it away howling. "The little cat beat the big dog!" Rex's comment was, "I guess the big dog wasn't hungry enough".

Both Betty and Rex caught tuberculosis and spent around four months in isolation huts in Wanganui Hospital recovering. Rex had caught it first, and it hadn't been picked up until he had an x-ray for some other reason. Then they checked the whole family and found that Betty also had it but hers was less advanced than Rex's. My most striking memory of this is of the enormous pills that Betty had to take. They were disc shaped white capsules and seemed about the size of a penny. She had to soften them in water trying to avoid them breaking open, and then with difficulty swallow them. When Betty spent her time in Wanganui Hospital, Mrs Parkes was paid to move in to cook and take care of the housework. She took good care of us kids and made great roly-poly puddings.

I found out in much later life that Rex had been married and divorced before marrying Betty, and had had a son, Kelly Bryers, from that marriage. Ivy Veronica O'Shaughnessy was nineteen years older than Rex. The mother and son lived in Wanganui. It was a big surprise to Grant and the others to learn that they had a half-brother. Betty met the son when he came to do a painting job in Raetihi, and she saw Rex's ex-wife at a distance in Wanganui once when shopping with Doody Bryers who knew her.

Rex and Betty had the prize flower garden three years in a row in Raetihi. Rex had found a rimu tree in the bush and carefully dug it out with the front-end loader and carried it back to plant in the middle of the lawn. It is still there.

Towards the end of his life, Rex suffered from minor strokes resulting in a loss of short-term memory. Although he could not remember what happened two minutes ago, he still retained his good manners and was a favourite with the young kids who used to come on school visits to the rest-home that was part of Taihape hospital. When coming back to Raetihi for a few days, he got out of the car and saw a group of people across the road. Why are those people there? he asked. Nancy Winter died, said Betty. This caused Rex to temporarily black out for a few seconds. After Grant and Betty got him up, he looked across the road again and said, Why are those people there? Let's get him inside, Betty said.

His native Bryers cunning never deserted him, even when his memory did. The rest-home in Taihape had a security system that involved a combination lock, with the number for the lock written high above it on the wall, the idea being that those with short-term memory loss at risk of wandering would not be able to remember the code long enough to key it into the lock. Rex solved this problem by getting another resident to call out the numbers while he keyed them in. The both of them then got into the car belonging to the manager of the rest home. The key was in the car and so they drove to the nearest pub in Taihape where the police found them when the alarm was raised. Rex always had a few dollars in his pocket and so had no trouble paying for their beers.

Rex died on 22 February 2004 in Taihape, and his funeral was held in the new combined club in Seddon Street in Raetihi at which several of his friends and family spoke remembering his good humour and hard work. He was buried in the returned servicemen's part of Raetihi cemetery with his kids deciding to fill in the grave themselves. It seemed an appropriate and fitting thing to do.

Betty revealed later that she thought it was likely that Rex was not really a Bryers because his mother had probably had an affair with Arnie (Arnold) Burling who had something of a reputation as a ladies man. Apparently, Rex looked a lot like him and when Betty saw the supposed father and Rex together walking up the steps of the grandstand at a rugby game, she unwittingly said “That guy looks a lot like Rex” and she was shushed up by her mother who told her the story. Rex’s mother, Ruby, was blond and very good looking. Subsequent DNA analysis by Susan showed however that Rex was definitely a Bryers.

When I finished primary school at Raetihi in 1956, I went to live with Johnny and Audrey in Ohakune, so that I could go to Ruapehu College. By then Grant was four, Susan was three and Ross was just born.

My good friends in Raetihi were the McDonnell twins (Billy and Jimmy) who lived just down the road, Allan Garmonsway, Mervyn Chan, Tom Punch, Billy Edwards and Mervyn Reynolds. Our favourite places to play were the hill covered with pines which had the reservoir tank on top, and the scrub covered hill down by the river behind the milk factory.

In the afternoon when I came home from primary school, I used to take Grant for a ride in his pushchair. We used to head down Seddon Street. The pushchair needed a bit of oil, and it made a fairly piercing squeak as we slowly moved along. The shopkeepers could hear us coming, and one day Trevor Garmonsway who worked in Marshall’s store (which used to be my grandparent’s stationery and watchmaker’s shop) could bear it no longer and rushed out with an oil can and oiled the wheels.

I got interested in vegetable gardening and with the help of the McDonnell twins, managed to clear and lever out the big clumps of grass on the King Street side of the house. The soil had never been planted before and everything I planted grew well, including strawberries. I think the cattle and sheep manure from the cattle crates also helped.

One day Betty sent me down to Chung Moon’s shop, the Thistle, opposite the pub to buy something. When I got home with it, she asked, Where’s Grant? I had left him sitting outside the shop in his pushchair. Goodness knows what he thought when I came out of the shop and walked straight past him. When I rushed back, he was surrounded by a group of old ladies fussing over him.

Grant’s nickname was Bimbo (after a popular song at that time). Bimbo Bryers had a certain ring to it. Fortunately, the nickname did not last into school years. His younger brother Ross had the nickname Froggy. This was because one night the dogs had bailed up a frog which then began to scream very loudly. This astonished him (and me too I must admit) and for days he went around saying “Froggy go eeee eeee!”.

One day Betty and I were in the sitting room when we heard this wicked laugh. Clearly Grant was having too much fun for it not to be trouble. Sure enough, he had discovered that if you dropped pegs in the toilet, they made a nice plopping sound and made the water splash. Grant was always on the look-out for trouble, but he was cautious. When Rex came home drunk, he would often hide.

As a young child, he went out with Rex in the truck. When he came home, he put two of the kitchen chairs together to make a truck, sat on one of them pretending he was driving along, stopped, got off, walked round the front and looked underneath and said “Fuck!” Betty said “No, say ‘Fix it’”. Grant went through his routine again, this time saying “Fuck! Fix it.”

Grant liked listening to the radio, and the radio/record player, which sat on the floor in the living room, had a permanent dent in it where he tapped his feet against the speaker.

He also had a dogged persistence. One time he was in Ohakune while Betty and Rex went to Wanganui. Something upset him, so he decided he was going home and started walking to Raetihi, over ten kilometres away. I tried to talk him out of it unsuccessfully, so followed him at a distance in the car to make sure he was OK. He got there! Not bad for a young kid.

He made a shanghai once and to get the leather for the piece where you put the stone, he cut the tongue out of one of Rex’s brand new work boots. To give Rex credit, when he came to put on his boots and found the tongue missing, instead of getting mad, he laughed. I guess he remembered his own childhood.

6.12 Susan and Grant Bryers

Susan was a cute fair-headed child. She pre-empted any bullying problems at school by going up to the toughest kid in the class, Johnny Vallander, and saying “Will you be my friend?” Who could refuse her?

Susan tricked Ross into eating a spoonful of mustard by saying “Peanut butter, Froggy”. When Betty came home, he was taking gulps of water to put out the fire. This got him into trouble with Rex, and he was threatened with a whack because he was drinking lots of water just before the evening meal. He was a picky eater and being full of water would not help.

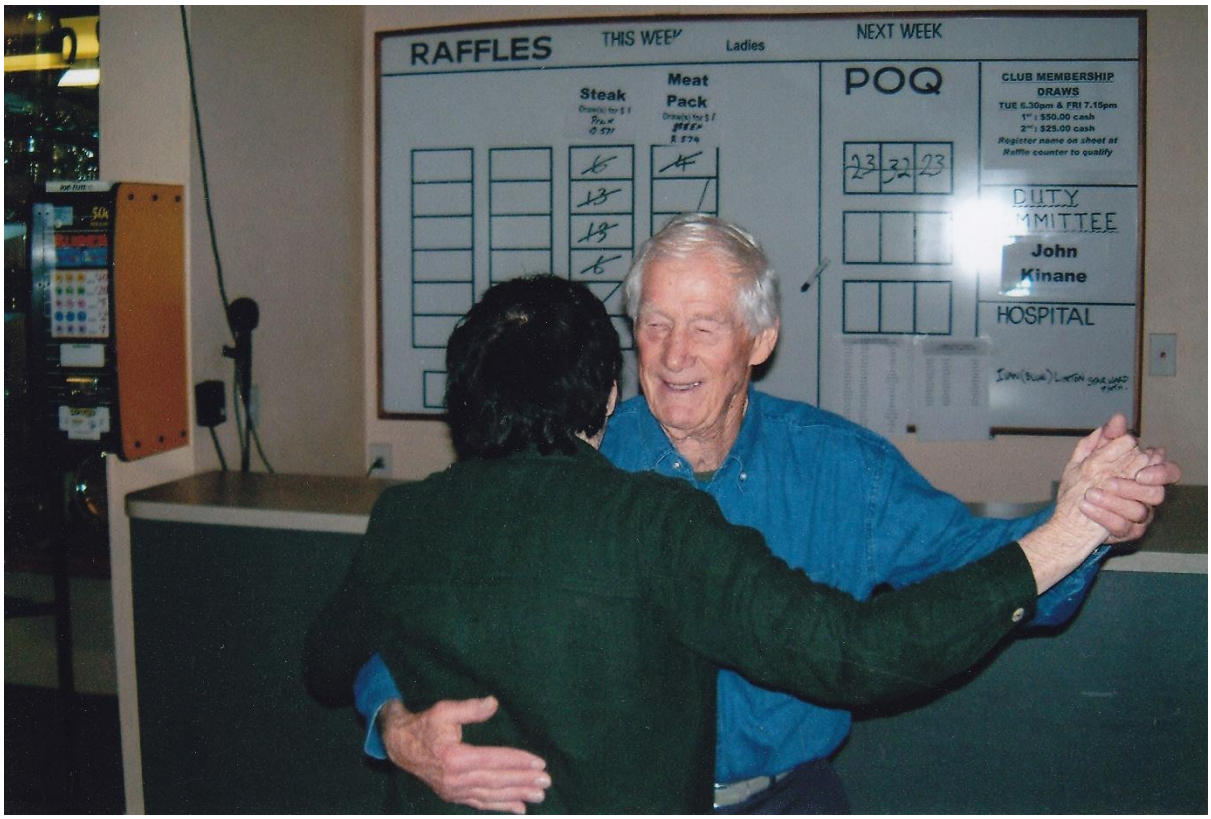
Susan was mad about horses and was probably the only child in Raetihi to have a by-law passed against her. When it rained, she used to ride her horse under the shop verandahs along the footpath. When the Council found out there was no law against it, they passed one.

Ross was always interested in fixing things. I remember him playing with on old spark plug and figuring out that if you used your hanky to help hold it, you could unscrew the nut on the top. He had a pair of big boots like his dad, and used to clump his way around, and use them to beat out the rhythm, not very rhythmically, to Katy the Kangaroo.

Betty suffered from bipolar disease in her later life. She was OK for much of the time and then would alternate between depression and almost manic activity where she would sleep only about an hour a day. This occurred at intervals until she moved to Foxton and got a doctor at Palmerston North hospital who really knew how to handle her medication.

I was so proud of her kids, Grant, Susan and Ross, with the way they took care of her when she was ill. Grant set short term goals for her such as going to see the great grandkids or going to a reunion so that there was always something to look forward to. Susan with her no nonsense cheerfulness took Betty out and made sure she did things she would enjoy. Ross visited her regularly and ran her around.

After Rex died, Betty married Jack Ingham who she had known since she was a teenager. Their wedding was a double ceremony with her son Ross marrying Galina Platonovna Park. Mother and son married in the same ceremony. The ceremony was held in the combined club in Raetihi opposite the old picture theatre. Bernice Ashwell, the last of the aunties and uncles, came from Gisborne.




6.13 Dancing with Jack

Jack was a retired school principal and school inspector whose wife had died several years earlier. He was good-looking, a true gentleman and an excellent dancer. He had served in the

navy in the second world war, in charge of one of the landing boats on D-day. When talking to Betty about a movie I had seen called *After Life* where you could take a five second memory of your past life to the next, I asked her what memory she would choose to take. Without hesitation she said, "Dancing down the RSA with Jack." They went dancing at least twice a week and had very happy times together. They came with us on a holiday to Rarotonga (Betty's only trip outside of New Zealand). I was a bit worried that at their advanced ages they would fall sick and might have to be hospitalised. As it turned out, I caught a cold and could not do much snorkelling, while they went swimming, kayaking, and dancing at the airport to the sound of the ukulele as we were leaving. They had a great time and had the photos to prove it. It was so good to see the both of them really enjoying life the second time around. While there, Prahm's mother-in-law, Mata Mataa, and her partner Neville welcomed us and put on a barbecue for us.


6.14 Betty and Jack in Rarotonga


6.14 Betty and Jack using local transport in the Cook Islands

Jack and Betty spent their time between Foxton and Mount Manganui where Jack had a house. Jack told me once that I did not need to worry about Betty as they were devoted to each other.

From when Rex was in the home in Taihape, we used to go to Gisborne each year for a few days to meet up with our remaining aunts and uncles and their family – Dorothy and George Skuse, Laurie and Bernice Ashwell, and Hope and Geoff Smith and their children. Now there are no aunts and uncles left. These trips were fun. We would usually stay in a motel (favourites were the Teal Motel and the White Heron Motor Lodge) and would visit each relative. At some point, we would have a big family dinner often at the Chinese restaurant owned by Meng Foon, the mayor of Gisborne (later to become New Zealand's race relations conciliator). Betty tried food she had not tried before – pizza, Macdonalds, Indian food,

Chinese food and some Thai food. She drew the line at purple lettuce, not convinced that it really was fresh and that it was supposed to be purple. Jack came on the last of these visits.

After Jack died, Betty made no claim on Jack's house in Mount Manganui as she felt it really belonged to Jack's children. She lived in Foxton near Susan but became increasingly anxious and unable to take care of herself. She suffered a small stroke and after treatment in Palmerston North Hospital, she went into the Masonic Home in Queen Street in Levin where she got physiotherapy and recuperative care. I was working in Japan when she had the stroke. When she came out of an induced coma her first words were "Bugger, I am still alive." She then moved into Willard Rest Home, a Presbyterian run charity in Palmerston North. She was happy enough there and liked the meals. She did not socialise with the other residents, but did enormous amounts of reading. The public library was fantastic, sending her two bags of books every couple of weeks and noting which ones she liked and selecting others like those. When we came up from Wellington to see her, we used to stop at Archway Books at Pukerua Bay and exchange books (mainly biographies) to take to her. Peter Nation was also fond of that bookshop, particularly as a source of science fiction books.

When Betty needed more care in 2015, she moved to Madison Life Care in Queen Street in Levin. She had grown weaker and lost interest in reading. Her speech became increasingly difficult to understand, partly caused by my deteriorating hearing and by the effects of her earlier stroke. Nitha and I visited her a few days before she died, and she was very appreciative of Nitha's concern for her bruised arm. Nitha also cleaned her fingernails. Her death was a release for her, as in spite of her children's loving and persistent efforts, she had lost most of her quality of life. She had lost the will and strength to carry on. She was cremated and her ashes buried with Rex Bryers in his servicemen's grave at Raetihi cemetery. She had bought her coffin around ten years previously and it was stored in Susan's garage.

She was both sister and mother to me, and I always felt loved and cared for.

## Chapter 7 Johnny and Audrey Nation

Johnny was fourteen years older than me. My earliest memory of him was when he had left school and was working for Arthur Channings, dressed in a sports jacket and tie. I also remember him and Peter half-heartedly wrestling on the back lawn. Peter had the height, Johnny the strength.

| John Lawrence Nation | Age |
|---|---|
| Born 15 May 1930 | |
| Mother died 25 December 1949 | 19 |
| Father died 14 March 1952 | 21 |
| Married Audrey Eileen Willcox May 1953 | 23 |
| Birth of 1st child Allan John 28 September 1954 | 24 |
| Birth of 2nd child Tracy Ann 6 November 1959 | 29 |
| Stopped baking bread and shop built early 1960s | 30 |
| Birth of 3rd child Gaye Sarah 23 October 1963 | 33 |
| Birth of 4th child Stephen (Steve) Campbell 3 May 1965 | 35 |
| A-frame house built 1978 | 48 |
| Audrey died 18 October 2000 | 70 |
| Died 29 August 2003 | 73 |

My oldest brother John Lawrence Nation was born on 15 May 1930 around the beginning of the depression. He was very attached to his father and used to follow him around all the time.

7.1 John aged around three

Even as a child he must have had a keen business sense, because he earned money before the school day began by delivering papers. He certainly loved to work. After school, when he

was barely a teenager, he made toffee apples, when sugar and sweets were scarce, and sold them. According to Betty, they were delicious. Thomas Bakery was able to get supplies of sugar that were otherwise severely rationed because of the war.

To deliver the papers, he had to first collect them from the railway station at Ohakune Junction. On a cold frosty morning, someone had done him the kindness of collecting the papers and dropping them at the back door of the house so that he didn't have to make the long bicycle journey. In his drowsiness however, he stepped right over the papers and cycled all the way to the Junction, only to find that they were already back in Ohakune.

7.2 John and Peter at their Aunt Pearl Nation’s wedding in October 1940

He recalled that his Dad never said a harsh word to him. Once as a teen-ager when he had been drinking, he asked his Dad if he could borrow the car. His father said calmly “Don’t you think you’ve had enough”. That was the nearest his Dad got to criticising him.

At the end of the Second World War, my father got him to leave school and start work in the bakehouse. Betty was annoyed by this, because John had a good brain and was doing well at school and was near the top of his class. She felt his academic skills, particularly his maths skills, were wasted. At the same time, he worked part-time for Arthur Channings in his bookmaking business, which started his interest in betting on the horses. Arthur Channings had a small furniture shop in Goldfinch Street between the current bookshop and the Rendezvous tearooms, and book-making was an illegal more profitable activity. Arthur Channings was clearly a gambling man. I was told by Bill TeKaru that Arthur lost his house in Ohakune Junction to Archie Bryant (the bottle and scrap dealer) in a poker game, and he and his wife Maud had to go and live in his batch at Waiterere, where my father and I once had a holiday by the beach. Knowing Archie Bryant, I wouldn't have played poker with him. Wouldn’t have played with Arthur either come to think of it.

7.3 John Nation at the Anglican church

John was in the Anglican church choir. When he sang in the choir, my brother Peter would go along and sit in the front row and secretly make faces at him. Tears would run down John's face as he struggled to stop himself from bursting out laughing. John and Peter were completely different personalities, and like most brothers occasionally fought with each other, but never very seriously. John always finished everything he began, and he was not afraid of hard work.

When he went into the bakehouse, probably around the end of the Second World War when he was about 15 years old, it was difficult at first because a young boy was effectively taking over the running of the bakehouse over older more experienced workers like Ralph George. That problem was soon resolved. I guess largely because they could not fault his attitude and his hard work.

Johnny’s close school-friends included several around his own age – Alwyn Moss (Mossie), Pat Goldfinch, Sharkey Marshall, Ted Townsend, and several three or four years older – Mick Dillon, Don (Scumpy) Stewart, Tom Pearce, Alan Berry and Jack Woodward. These all remained lifelong friends, and for well over seventy years they met each year at a reunion alternatively held in Auckland and Ohakune (in later years at Mick Dillon’s place on Middle Road near Horopito).

7.4 Tom, John, & Mick Dillon

In May 1953 he married Audrey Eileen Willcox in a double wedding in Ohakune where Audrey's younger sister Shirley married Jack Blue. At the large wedding reception in St. John's hall, the father of the bride, Bert Willcox, complained that he had just acquired two useless sons-in-law. They were both very good at their trades (Jack was an electrician working for the Power Board), but they were hopeless at doing work around the house like mowing lawns and doing gardening, so he would have to keep doing those jobs. Johnny fully agreed with him. We cannot find any posed photos of the wedding, although I am sure they existed. We have to wait until 2028 to be able to access the marriage records to find the exact date of the wedding.

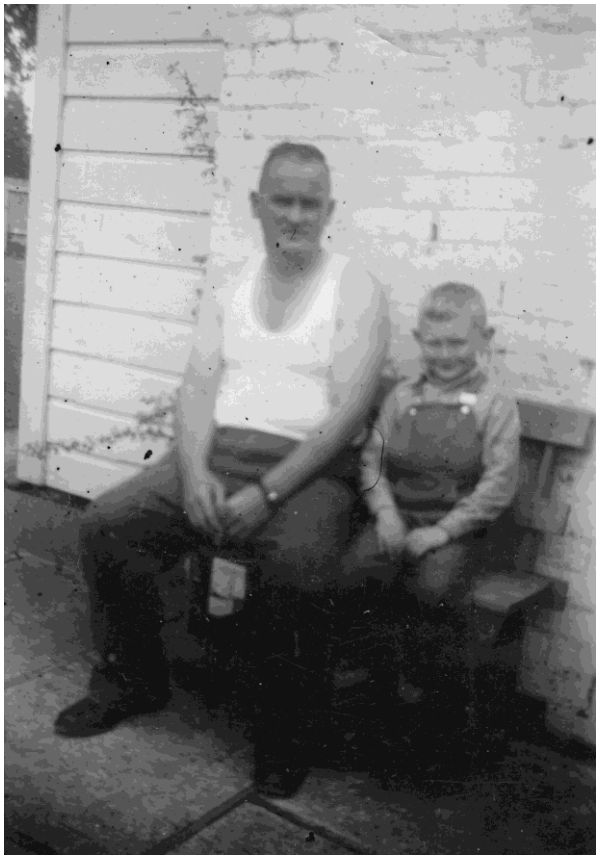
7.5 John and Audrey's wedding (Pat Goldfinch and Winnie TeKaru on the right)

Johnny and Audrey were courting when my father died. The Willcox family had by then moved from a small farm in Burns Street to the house on the western corner of Clyde Street and Arawa Street, just across the road from our place. Colin Thomas and family lived there

before that. I still remember Audrey caring for me as a seven year old and helping me make fudge at her place, while all the others went to the funeral.

7.6 Shirley, Bob & Audrey Willcox in 1943

Johnny was short and always active. He rarely walked anywhere but moved at a run. He particularly loved green gooseberries and radishes (I also acquired those tastes), and Bert used to grow both in his garden especially for him. We also had gooseberry bushes near our house.



7.7 Bert Willcox and Paul Nation in 1952 behind the Willcox house in Clyde Street

Johnny worked in the bakehouse with Ralph George, Hec Hodge, and Percy Tocker. Harry Sutton did the bread and cake deliveries in the big van around Waiouru, and Percy also used to make a run there at the end of his working day at around 7am. A succession of other drivers did deliveries to Raetihi, and to Horopito and Pokaka, including house to house

deliveries. These drivers included Mick Dillon in the very early days (he taught Betty to drive when she went with him on the Waiouru run when she was about 15), Graham Dixon, Georgie George, and Ron White. Dinny Ryan (Pattison), who used to drive a horse and cart around town, later worked in the bakehouse as a cleaner. His son Charlie was a close friend of mine, and we were in the scouts together. I had a soft spot for Ralph George, and he was particularly kind to me. I recall him telling me once that if I ever needed any help, I should go to him. His son Ken was one of my closest friends at school. Ralph was a whistler but in a very quiet way. He later had a problem with one of his knees and walked having to flick his lower leg forward.

Johnny was a member of the Ohakune District High Old Pupils Association, and I remember hilarious meetings with Max Martin, Bruce Thompson, Jimmy Lim Yock, John Evans and others to plan and prepare a float for the procession for the fiftieth anniversary of the driving of the last spike on the main trunk line. I recall it involved a dead possum which someone was pretending to eat and a school building with the Runfreely Challenge Shield (an old toilet seat).

7.8 Audrey, Tracy, Allan and John at Nanny Waring's in 1959

I got my driver's licence as soon as I was 15. I could barely see over the steering wheel, because I was still rather short. I often got surprised looks as I drove through town, as it seemed as if it was a driverless vehicle. I used to do deliveries in the school holidays when the other drivers wanted to take a holiday. I also went with the Horopito run driver at Christmas, because they would be drunk by the time they had stopped at a few houses and been invited in for a Christmas drink, or two. The Horopito run could have been done in under two hours, but everyone there wanted to talk and get the news from town. So, it invariably took over four hours. Those living in Horopito, Erua and Pokaka still led fairly isolated lives in the late 1950s. At one place in Erua, a lady used to give me her "letter for Mr Cleary". Jim Cleary ran the TAB in Ohakune, and her letter was her bets for the week. There

was never any letter coming the other way. I don't think her husband knew that she was betting on the horses. I imagined her sitting at home quietly knitting with the radio on, while inside herself she was in a frenzy urging her horse on to the winning post.

In the early days of the bakehouse, the ovens were heated by burning carbonettes which were roughly the size and shape of a duck egg and were made out of compressed coal dust. The carbonettes were stored loose in the room on the north-west side of the bakehouse and were shovelled into the ovens under what now are the stairs to the loft. I guess some time in the 1950s, the oven was converted to electricity and the electric ovens were added. I still remember going across to the bakehouse with the fire shovel to get a shovel full of burning carbonettes to take back to the house to start the kitchen stove which was coal-fired. When the ovens were converted to electricity, then cutting the kindling wood for the fire became one of my jobs.

Working in the bakehouse involved starting work in the late afternoon to mix the dough for the next day's bread, which after being mixed was manhandled into large troughs. Then it was left to rise. Work started again around two a.m., with the dough being punched down and left to rise again, while the buns, cakes and pies were made. In the early days, the dough was cut by hand, and each piece was quickly checked on a balance scale for the right weight and dropped into the roller, which was either set up to roll a single long one loaf (a sandwich loaf), or one divided into two halves with a raised top (a barracouta). Ralph George was particularly fast at doing the cutting and weighing, adding a little or taking a little away from each loaf as necessary to get the right weight. By around seven or eight in the morning, the work was largely done, and the vans went off with their deliveries.

Around the early1960s, John Gould who had by then taken over the rival bakehouse in the town from his father Max, Ohakune Bakery, started talking with Johnny about each bakehouse specialising in different things – Ohakune Bakery producing largely only bread (and a few buns and rolls for early deliveries), and Thomas Bakery not making any bread at all, but baking only smallgoods such as cakes, buns and pies. I remember the early negotiations taking place on a huge tractor inner tube that Bert had got for us to play on on our front lawn. John Gould had previously made offers to buy Johnny out of the business, but Johnny had turned him down. John Gould bought out other bakeries at Raetihi, Taumarunui and elsewhere so he could expand his bread production to sell to a much wider delivery area, contracting out the delivery to a local contractor, Mick Burroughs. Making smallgoods was more of a nuisance than a benefit to him, and he was already buying in cake from a Palmerston North bakery. The idea of specialising was clearly very attractive to Johnny, and he took to it straight away, because a very big expense and a continual headache in the business was the cost of maintaining three delivery vans. They reached agreement on this, involving a ten year restraint on one producing bread and the other producing smallgoods, and the results were very beneficial for both of them. John Gould quickly increased the size of his business and was delivering bread as far as Palmerston North to the south and beyond Taumarunui to the north. Johnny was able to cut down on the vans (I inherited an old Morris Cowley van that was worth nothing as a trade-in, but still had a few years of life in it), closed the small shop (where his mother-in-law Ella Willcox worked for several years) that was part

of the Ohakune picture theatre building, and built and later extended the shop in front of the bakehouse. It also meant that he did not have to employ quite so many people in the bakehouse, and when Ralph George, Percy Tocker, and Hec Hodge eventually retired, they were not replaced.

When the ten year restraint period was up, John Gould made pies aiming at the pre-packaged market. Johnny made cheese loaves for the shop.

In my early days at university, John Gould kindly gave me a job in his bakehouse during the university holidays, providing me with plenty of overtime if I wanted it. John Gould's business eventually reached the point where he had to consider rebuilding the bakehouse in Ohakune to meet the increasing competition from larger bakeries and supermarkets. He worked out that the figures did not add up, so he closed Ohakune Bakery, and the building was partly demolished (now part of the car park on Goldfinch Street), and the back part was turned into shops which now include the Bank of New Zealand and the chemist's. The irony was that John Gould was then mayor of Ohakune, and he was trying to increase employment in the town.

I guess another irony was that it was the smallest business that survived. By becoming basically a family-sized business, the bakehouse and shop could cope with the small and decreasing population in Ohakune.

The shop in front of Thomas Bakery was built by the Winchcombe Brothers – Rodney and Peter -- in the early 1960s. Originally it was a cake and sweet shop, and tea rooms. It was also used for occasional meetings by the local growers' association led by Jim Foster when there was a move to specialise in carrot growing. The shop soon turned out to be too small and was extended on the east side, doubling its size. The extension took up the space where the delivery vans used to be parked. Before the extension, there was a hedge between the present driveway to the house and the parking area for the vans. Running the tea rooms part of the business turned out to be too labour-consuming and that was eventually discontinued. One of the tables from that time remained in the shop for many years as the morning tea table.

When Ohakune was still part of a "dry" area, Johnny like his father before him, ran a sly-grog business, with the beer trucked up from Wanganui. People used to come round the back of the house, usually in the evening, to buy crates of beer. For security's sake, some of the beer was stored in the hen house. The cops eventually caught up with the business and Johnny was fined, but the profits probably far outweighed the fine. When the King Country was no longer a dry area and the Ohakune hotel was opened with its bottle store, there was no need for such a business. Fittingly, Johnny and Audrey were among the original shareholders in the Ohakune hotel.

One of the first cars that Johnny owned was a two-tone Hillman Californian, red hardtop, white body. I think he owned it before he was married. For a year or so, the woodshed which was to the west of the house was cleared of firewood and the car parked in there under shelter.

7.9 John and Audrey's children – Tracy, Allan, Gaye and Steve in 1985

The building of the shop and the change in the nature of the bakehouse was a major change. It now meant Johnny worked even harder in that the shop was open seven days a week, and every day of the year with an early closing (around 2pm) on Christmas day. This meant Johnny did a 2am to around 7am shift in the bakehouse, went to bed for about three hours and was in the shop from before lunchtime until it closed at 7pm. Then evening meal, watching TV, and off to bed by about 9pm to be ready for another 2am start. Weekends usually meant a 4am or 5am start, but when the ski-fields on the mountain opened up, an earlier start was needed to keep up. It was work he enjoyed, and although he occasionally went on trips to the United States or Australia with Audrey and Bill TeKaru and others, he once told me he went because of Audrey, and he would have been just as happy staying at home. He worked at a very fast pace and making the sponge drops and filling the cup-cake containers was a sight to see.

7.10 Bob and his father Bert Willcox (Audrey's father)

Audrey and Bob Willcox were twins, and they had a younger sister, Shirley. Their father Bert was the head of the Ministry of Works in Ohakune, and was responsible for extending and sealing the Mountain Road up to the Turoa ski fields. While at work, his shoulder was injured, and he lost a large part of the use of one of his arms.

John and Audrey were keen and accomplished lawn bowlers. As the work increased, John had less time for bowls, but Audrey continued to play and win.

Over the years, John bought up the three properties on the east side of the house and bakehouse. The nearest house had been owned by Ron and Mona White. Ron worked as a delivery driver for the bakehouse for a while, and then worked in Waiouru for the Ministry of Works. The next house was owned by Doris and Eric Dixon, and their family remained close friends of the Nations over many years. They eventually moved to Old Station Road. The Gahan family and then the Workmans lived there for a few years. The next house was owned by Harry and Dolly Davis and there was a small house next to theirs which Bob Willcox and his wife Celia lived in when they were first married. These houses were eventually pulled down, and the A-frame was built. Then the car yard and laundromat and flat were built. After Nitha and I were married in Thailand, we had a wedding celebration in Ohakune in what had been the Dixons' house. Fortunately, a lot of photographs were taken, and they remain an interesting record of Ohakune residents at the time (early 1969).

7.11 The Nation family at the 1969 wedding celebration

7.12 Ella Willcox, June Foster, Madge Watson and Audrey in 1969

The A-frame house was built in 1978, and the Nation family moved several metres up the street.

7.13 The A-frame in 1978

John had to get special permission to build the A-frame in an area that was designated for commercial buildings. Some councillors were not happy with the decision to allow it, but it was passed on some technicality as the residence of the operator of the businesses next to it.

With the move to the A-frame, the walk across the road to the Willcox house was even shorter than before. Audrey's mother, Ella, worked in the shop for the bakehouse next to the picture theatre until it closed when the shop in front of the bakehouse was built. Ella was a very hard worker and had earned money by pulling carrots for market gardeners, and collecting mushrooms in the season and sending them to the market (before the days of commercial mushroom growing). She had lived through the depression and had had to cope with three young children while Bert was away in Egypt and Italy in the Second World War. We got on well. She was very organised around the house, and when I was sick, I would stay with her, largely because I got my medicine on time. Ella was troubled by the accidental death of her brother Mick (Desmond Robert Death) on 6th August 1950. Mick and two locals had been at a wedding celebration and had a drink at Ella's about 3:30 am before going a very short way up the Rangataua Road to a farm. Mick who was not a local was driving and was unfamiliar with the bridge. The truck went into the river and all three drowned. Ella felt that people blamed her for giving them a drink which may have contributed to their death. She kept photos of the three of them in her dining room. She spoke to me about it, saying they had had only one whiskey with her before going.

Ella went through financially difficult times in her early life, and she was determined not to be poor again. She worked hard to be sure of that. She was proud of having several thousand pounds in her bank account. In spite of that, like Audrey, she loved playing cards.

To others, she seemed to have a rather mournful disposition. I remember when Audrey and John came back from one of their first holidays in Australia. We were all in the living room of the house next to the bakehouse, and Johnny was excited about the shopping he had done. He was talking about this large counter of nuts where he went round and round buying various kinds of nuts. He came back with a suitcase full of them. Whenever he got excited, Ella would chip in with "Old so-and-so died while you were way". Everyone would go quiet,

and then Johnny would get started again. Once again, Ella would say “Old so-and-so’s in hospital”. Quiet again. This happened three times in that conversation.

She loved a party, and after a few drinks would join in the dancing such as the Gay Gordons and would entertain me by blowing into her hands to make a deep hooting noise, something like an owl. From her, I learned how to make potato cakes and curried mince, two foods I still enjoy and eat often.

To the grandchildren, Ella was known as Nana, and Bert as Uncle Bert instead of granddad. Bert was of a generation where physical affection was not usually shown, and the use of Uncle may have been a sign of that.

As Ella and Bert got older and Bert had retired, they found it difficult to get on with each other, quibbling over small things, and eventually Bert moved to live by himself at the Junction end of Old Station Road. Bob told me how to find the house – look for the place with the fence made out of old red and white Ministry of Works road-marker posts! Every so often, Audrey and someone else would go up there to tidy up when Bert was out. As a result, for the next two weeks he could not find the various cutlery and plates he used. Bert still called in on Ella most days and kept the lawns mowed. He also took over the care of our cat (never to return), when we headed off to Thailand for a couple of years.

Ella was a heavy smoker with a cough to match. It had the positive effect of encouraging me not to smoke. She still managed to reach 77 before she died in Raetihi Hospital of respiratory problems. Her house was bought as a holiday home by a very close friend of the family, Mick Dillon, who lived in Auckland.

When Bert became less able to look after himself, he moved into a small room on the second floor of the A-frame. He was diabetic, but used to quietly help himself to chocolate bars from the shop. He still mowed the lawns, made a fence between the house and the car yard, kept the woodbox supplied, and kept an eye on potential shoplifters at the shop.

I was a pall-bearer when he died in 1995 at the age of 85. I had to summon help as the coffin was much heavier than I expected. I also think the grave at the Lakes Road Cemetery was barely wide enough to fit the generously sized coffin.

A few years after the double wedding of Audrey and Shirley, Shirley and family moved to Napier. I visited her there a couple of times, usually on my way to Gisborne. Her husband Jack became more of a solitary drinker, and the marriage eventually broke up. I think Jack may have married again. Shirley married again, to Rex Flanders. They had a small orchard and sent fruit over to Ohakune. Shirley was very happy, and her and Audrey’s close friend, June Foster, moved over to live near her in Napier after June’s husband died. Shirley died in 2009. I was very impressed with the way she handled her last months. She was very cheerful and lived in the present, seemingly unconcerned about her obvious decline. June died not too long after, in the same year, a smoker to the end. As she said, it is the last of my pleasures, so I am not going to give it up.

Audrey's twin brother Bob married Celia Te Ringariria Downs. They had four children, Robyn-Anne, David, Brenda-Lee, and Shane, and Bob was proud of how well they had done. Celia was particularly kind to me as a child, and I have very happy memories of her.

After Bob and Celia separated, Bob spent several years in Napier in the 1970s, working on the Ministry of Works until a work injury while driving a grader eventually resulted in the loss of a leg. Eventually the leg was amputated above the knee.

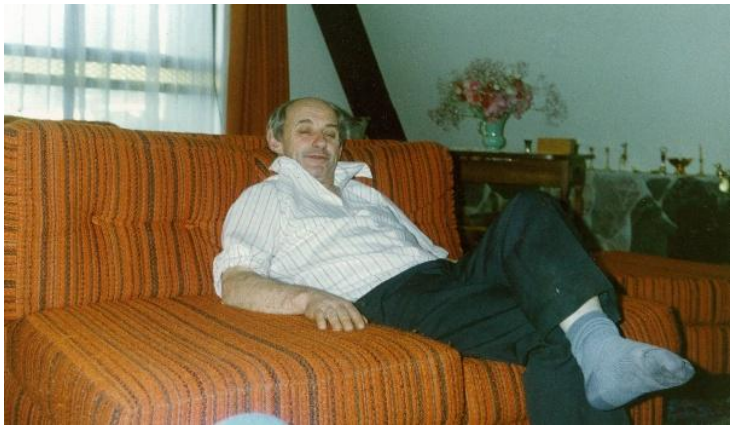
The Rangitaiki Tavern on the Napier-Taupo Road and the Royal Hotel in Napier had a darts competition, but no trophy. The Royal Hotel was not far from where Bob lived. Bob was in there having a drink, and he asked what the darts players were like. The publican said they were nice fellows, so Bob offered his old artificial leg as a trophy. The Rangitaiki Tavern won, and so Bob's leg is now on the wall of the Rangitaiki Pub on the Napier-Taupo Road. Ella tried, I think successfully, to get a free drink at the pub on the basis of being the mother of the owner of the leg. While in Napier, he had his own flat and occasionally stayed with Shirley and family. When Shirley remarried, he moved with her to Havelock North, before moving back to Ohakune.

Bob's nickname, created by his mate Graham Dixon, was Splitpin, largely because at that time he was thin. In later life, he lived in the pensioner flats in Moore Street in Ohakune. He kept his flat very neat and tidy, and used to come to the shop early in the morning to make the bread rolls. He would stay on till morning tea and then head home again.

Bob and I had a running joke. Whenever he turned up at a party in the A-frame, we would say "Hello-Goodbye" when he arrived, because we both knew that he would not stay long.

As he grew older, he looked more like his father Bert, with a bald head and gaining weight. He eventually ended up in a care home in Rotorua, where his daughter Robyn-Anne lived. Bob died in 2015, and his children in Australia came over for the funeral in Ohakune.

In 2000, Audrey caught an infection of the pancreas and was in Wanganui hospital for a while and then was transferred to Wellington for an operation. The operation was a tricky one but seemed to have been successful, and she was recovering well. I visited her every day. She was not allowed to eat much, and I knew that she would like some grapes. So, much to the amusement of the other patients, I took her a small bunch of just two grapes which she chewed and then spat out. She was then transferred to Taihape hospital and was up and moving around. When the kids visited her there, they used to take her out to play the pokies at the Taihape Hotel. Then unexpectedly her operation wound started bleeding. She was rushed to Wanganui Hospital where they operated but she died. Her funeral was a hard time for all, but because the family was close, it was manageable. Tracy spoke very well at the funeral with the support of Gaye. Johnny coped during her illness and after by working hard as usual.



7.14 John at home

Towards the end of his life, Johnny sometimes became hard to talk to. He would snap at people, and you had to be careful what you said to him. At the time, I put it down to lack of sleep, but it may have been the result of undetected minor strokes which affected how he related to others. Maybe it was a combination of both.

Johnny suffered a stroke which paralyzed him down one side, so he was completely bed-bound. He never moaned or complained about it to me, but just accepted it. Friends who knew him through the shop used to visit him with ice creams, when he was in Palmerston North hospital. He died from an infection which shut down his kidneys and other vital organs.

He had a fire brigade funeral with the gathering held at Ohakune Junction in the old Masonic hotel there. He is buried next to Audrey in the Lakes Road cemetery. Instead of mourners throwing a flower or handful of dirt into the grave, Allan and Steve brought a container of flour for the same purpose. I remember Fish Haitana, the undertaker, complaining to me at a later funeral that he could not get the flour residue out of the straps used to lower the coffin into the grave.

Audrey's parents Bert and Ella are buried in the same cemetery on the hill overlooking the lake. After Audrey was buried, someone left a pile of 20 cent coins on her grave (in order to play cards in the next life with her old buddies June Foster, Heather Cranston, her mum Ella, and her sister Shirley). They remained there untouched for years.

## Chapter 8 Rosemary Anne Nation

| Rosemary Anne Nation | Age |
|---|---|
| Born 25 August 1931<br>Died 23 September 1932 | <br>1 |

8.1 Rosemary and Flo

Rosemary died of influenzal meningitis in Wanganui Hospital and is buried in Raetihi in what would later be her father and mother's grave. Dorothy Skuse's first daughter, who was born eight years later, was called Rosemary in her memory.

## Chapter 9 Peter and Pat Nation

| Peter Joseph Nation | Age |
|---|---|
| Born 11 January 1934 | |
| Married Patricia Tozer 23 February 1958 | 24 |
| Birth of 1st child Vicki 17 August 1963 | 29 |
| Birth of 2nd child Kris 4 August 1965 | 31 |
| Peter died 31 January 2015 | 81 |
| Pat died 4 July 2018 | |

Peter was born on 11 January 1934 and so was just over ten years older than me, and four years younger than Johnny. As a young child, he was very delicately boned and thin, and Betty and John were fascinated by this tiny, seemingly fragile baby with such thin wrists. He was often ill, particularly with stomach trouble. There was doubt that he would survive, and Betty and Johnny felt very protective towards him.

9.1 Sarah, Peter, Flo 1934

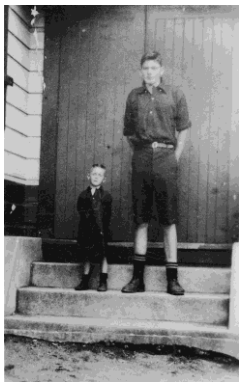
9.2 Peter on the large front lawn of the house in Clyde Street, Ohakune

9.3 Peter and his mother Flo in Ohakune around 1935

He had some illness like rheumatic fever, and he always considered that the local doctor, Dr Jordan, kept him alive in the worst times by reading him a chapter of a story when he came to check up on him, saying that he would be back to read him the next chapter in a couple of days, so hang in there.

9.4 Laurie & John, Flo & Peter with three daughters of Martin (Buster) Munro

When Peter first went to school, he naively greeted the headmaster (Joe Blyth) with “Good morning, Mr Joey”. Fortunately, Joey saw the funny side of it. Eventually, I guess, he had his revenge, because one day when he saw Peter, by far the smallest boy in the school, and Arthur Warner, by far the tallest boy in the school, he got a photo of both of them standing next to each other in their school uniforms. The contrast was striking.



9.5 Peter Nation and Arthur Warner at Ohakune District High School and primary school

For as long back as I can remember, Peter slept in the army hut next to the hen run, roughly parallel and next to the western boundary of the present section. At one time, around half of the right side and the back of the hut inside had a wide bench that Peter had built out of tongue and groove timber and had painted to show roads and the various parts of a village and countryside. He had a working train set and toy cars. Much later at 9 Duna Place in Palmerston North in the back of his garage, he built a similar village, making use of the same trains and vehicles. When he had left home to work and I was at secondary school, I took over the army hut.

As a child he was easily upset, often for no apparent reason. Mum taught him to read early, and he was very much an intellectual type, not good at sports, but very particular at doing

things carefully and well. He would get involved in a special project and devote all his time to mastering that, and then he would move on to the next challenge.

He was very different in personality from Johnny, Johnny being vigorous and businesslike with little skill at fixing things, while Peter was always precise and well planned in what he did. He built elaborate model planes out of balsa wood and strengthened tissue paper. He had his own particular ways of doing things which he always followed with great precision, including making cheese toast and reading the newspaper – vertically folded into four sections so it could be read section by section without taking up too much space in our narrow kitchen.

Johnny and Peter occasionally collaborated in mischief. Eric and Doris Dixon lived two doors up from them (where the car yard is now), and one day Johnny and Peter propped up a can of stones on a piece of wood and leaned it against the Dixon's back door. They knocked on the door and ran for it. Doris opened the door to be startled by the clatter of the stones falling into her kitchen. She of course thought her sons Graham and Ken had done it and called out for them at the top of her voice – Graham, Kenneth, come here this instant! (her usual way of calling them home). They were away playing somewhere or helping their dad and did not hear, but were in trouble when they got home.

With his careful do-it-yourself talents, Pete was destined to be an electrician. He left school to work in Wanganui for the Power Board, doing a lot of work for schools. I have a memory of my father giving advice to him just before he left for Wanganui. The advice was mainly do what the boss tells you and support the boss.

When an electrician friend Pat Cunningham saw him getting all the labouring jobs such as digging trenches, he said you are wasting your talents here, and helped him get a job in Leader and Watt's in Palmerston North. After several years of working for them, wiring houses and doing a wide variety of electrical jobs, around 1963, on urging from a friend who was working there, he joined the local power board as a troubleman. This meant a lot of after-hours work typically in very demanding conditions. When power lines came down in a storm, Peter and his colleagues had to put the power back on. This meant manipulating heavy ladders in windy and wet conditions, and although he was not solidly built, Pete managed this through skilful technique. For one who had so much illness in childhood, the fact that he did this demanding job so well showed his resilience and skill at getting on top of things. He greatly enjoyed working with the other troublemen, such as Brian Crawford, Bernie Bains, and Peter Robinson, who seemed to share his sense of humour, and they also met socially outside work hours to play cards and generally get together. The job had a certain excitement and danger to it, as they were called out when cars hit power poles or there was a severe storm. The troublemen had a great sense of camaraderie, as they were dependent on each other for their safety.

9.6 Pat in fancy dress (a hand-me-down she hated)

When the troublemen did work out in the Pihongana Valley, the farmers' wives so appreciated their work that they made soup and meals for them. They would put a sign on their gate saying food was ready, and they were expected to call in. One night rushing to a job Pete drove past, and when he came back, he was stopped by the farmer's wife and sternly told off for not coming in for his food. Pete also knew where the banana passionfruit vines grew wild in the valley, and in season stopped for a feed.

Eventually he became an inspector and worked at that job until he retired.

9.7 Pat

Before Peter and Pat were married, I used to go down to Palmerston North in the school holidays to 181 Botanical Board where Peter was boarding with Tot and Jack Tozer, Pat's parents. Pat met Peter at a dance in Palmerston North, and Peter drove her back home after the dance. She came home from work the next day to find Peter there, talking with her parents. From then on, they were together. Jack collected milk in churns from farmers and

delivered them to the milk factory. I went with him on the run once or twice, and my grandmother, Harriet Ashwell, also went with him when visiting Peter and Pat, and was impressed by the ease with which he handled the heavy churns. Jack later worked for the Glaxo factory just down the road. He had a big vegetable garden out the back and I was struck by the grey soil, very different from the dark volcanic soil of Ohakune and Raetihi.

At one time Pat became very ill, losing weight and feeling ill, particularly in the morning. The doctor could find nothing wrong, but she continued to be ill. Eventually someone noticed, going into her bedroom, that there was the smell of gas. The gas fire in her room had a leak, and each night when she went to bed, she was quietly being gassed.

Tot was a heavy smoker and had a terrible cough. Jack and Peter and Pat also all smoked. Tot had a budgie whose cage was in the kitchen, and it would be let out of the cage to fly around the kitchen and perch on her.

When staying with them, I used to walk into town or sometimes take the bus and go and see movies and buy practical jokes like Mucky Pup (plastic dog poop) or stink bombs. Pat was working as a signwriter in McKenzies department store in the square, occasionally serving on the counter. McKenzies was in competition with Woolworths and was what the Americans would call a five and ten cent store. I would drop in to see her, and sometimes we would meet up and be picked up by Peter to head home. I greatly enjoyed those holidays.

Peter and Pat were careful with saving money to build a house even before they married. A lot of care went into planning the house, and they had a family friend to build it. Jack and Tot paid for the driveway. It was a lovely house at 9 Duna Place, and I stayed there periodically when I went down for holidays. The house was built in the late 1950s.

Her father financed her into Bobby's cafeteria in George Street, one street back from the Square in Palmerston North. Bobby's provided cups of tea, sandwiches, cakes and light midday meals such as spaghetti on toast and poached eggs. Jack's sister, Ada, also worked in the shop. I was fascinated by Ada. To me, she looked like a gypsy - jet back hair, bright red lipstick, and big dangling earrings. Her husband, Horace, was a lovely fellow. Full of fun and interested in what I was doing. He wore a hat that seemed a bit too small for him and walked in a jaunty way. The shop was busy, but when afternoon tea finished, that was the end of work for the day. The RSA Cambridge book exchange was just down the street which provided me with a good supply of comics.

When I was a child, there was a series of comics called Classic Comics which consisted of literary classics like *The Count of Monte Cristo*, *The Man in the Iron Mask* and *Lorna Doone* presented in comic form. I had a lot of them and for years much of my literary knowledge came not from reading the originals but from reading the Classic Comics.

Peter and Pat always took good care of relatives. When Roy Skuse was doing a wool-classing course at Massey, he stayed with them. Roy was also a boxer. One night, when they came home from work, they thought Roy had gone crazy because he was outside pretending to fight someone. It turned out he was shadow boxing. Roy had to make a wool book as part of

his assessment for the course. This involved collecting various different kinds of wool and classifying them and labelling them in the book. When the students visited farms, the farmers would allow them to take samples of wool for their wool books. Roy would take a bit more than he needed, and he sold the extra wool to pay for the expenses of making his wool book.

I found out through Hope Smith's memoirs that Peter and Pat also took good care of Moira Smith when she was in Palmerston North.

Bill Ashwell stayed with Peter and Pat while studying, and Peter used to engage him in discussions and arguments that taxed Bill's keen brain. His father, our Uncle Bill Ashwell, was so grateful to them for the good care they took of Bill that he would never hear a word spoken against Peter.

When Grant and Vivienne Bryers moved to Palmerston North, Peter and Pat became honorary grandparents for Nick and Michelle. A kindness that Grant greatly appreciated.

If he had been born fifty years later, Peter would have been a highly-skilled computer technician, but he never took to computers. Whatever he did, he did thoroughly and well. In later life, this included rearing tropical fish. When he made his only overseas trip with the family through Indonesia to come and stay with us in Thailand, one of the highlights was going snorkelling around coral near an island off Samesarn south of Pattaya, where he could see the fish that he had in his tanks in their natural environment.

9.8 The Rhythmonics

Earlier on, with Jack Price and Barry Sait, Peter was part of a harmonica group called the Rhythmonics. Jack played lead harmonica, Peter the double harmonica that set the rhythm, and Barry played the long bass harmonica. When needed, Terry Tuwhare played string bass, and Barry later taught himself to play the string bass. Pat was often in the ticket box. They were often asked to play at functions and talent quests (Jazzbo Collins was always a hit, singing and wriggling out of his jacket), and while it did not make them a lot of money, they had a hell of a lot of fun. Much of it they created themselves. When Barry drove his car, he drove it like his aeroplane, fiddling with the various switches and buttons as he drove. One night, they had to rush between two gigs, and time was short. All of a sudden, the car

stopped. In a panic, they leapt out of the car to flag down some help to get a ride. At that point, Barry turned the key back on. He figured he had wound them up enough.

They made a record called the Harmony Cats containing favourites including *Hora Staccato, Caravan, Brazil, I Love Paris* and *the Man I Love*, and it got a mention in the papers. I remember Johnny excitedly waking me up early one morning to show me, when the papers for the shop containing the article had been delivered to the bakehouse. Barry was a top dressing pilot and died in a plane crash, and Jack went back to England to take up a song-writing and arranging career, ending the group. I remember at Peter's wedding in 1958, they secretly brought his harmonica along, and the group had to play before he could head off on his honeymoon. I also remember on Peter's wedding day going round with Peter and Allan Nation who was about four years old to Jack Price's place to pick up something. Allan saw Jack's well-kept cat and said regretfully "Our cats are mingy."

One time, the three of them were sitting around a table planning things, having a cup of tea, and getting rather excited. After a while, Pete and Jack figured out that they had been drinking the same cup of tea. When one put it down, the other unknowingly picked the same cup up.

9.9 Vicki, Kris, Peter and Pat

Peter got involved in Palmerston North repertory at the Globe theatre and worked in gang shows as properties manager and his practical skills made him a real asset. Later when he worked as a volunteer at the hospice and in the hospice shop, these same skills saved the hospice a lot of money, and his work was well appreciated. The cook at the hospice gave him a point for each thing he fixed for her and when he had enough points, she baked him date scones which he loved.

A few years before he died, I saw him mowing his lawn and the lawn mower was the top-of-the-line self-propelled one that he had bought when he first moved into the newly-built house over fifty years before. It rattled like mad because every joint was now well worn, but Pete had maintained it well and kept it going. So much for a seven year life span for household machinery and appliances!

9.10 Tot and Jack Tozer

Peter and Pat's house was built just down the road from Tot and Jack's at 9 Duna Place (one of Peter's workmates described him as the poor little shithouse who lived in dunny place that everyone made a convenience of).

When Peter and Pat's first child, Vicki. was born, Pat stopped work. After Jack died, Peter and Pat built a granny flat at the back of their house for Tot. She died not long after it was built.

9.11 Peter and Pat

Peter, Pat, Vicki and Kris had a South-east Asian holiday in 1979 when I was working in Thailand as a teacher at the Department of Technical and Economic Cooperation (DTEC) under the New Zealand Government's bilateral aid program. They came through Indonesia, meeting up with Father Ernest Bolsius on the way, and then staying with us in 110 Pradipat Road, Saphan Kwai, Bangkok for several weeks. It was Peter and Pat's only overseas trip.

Peter had a prostate operation which worried him afterwards. He considered that the operation had not been well done. He also suffered from a severe hernia which meant that he sometimes had to be rushed to hospital when it became strangulated. They were unwilling to operate on it because he had a weak heart, but eventually they did successfully. By this time,

he had begun to show signs of Alzheimers. He would put things away where no-one could find them, and it meant an end to his greatly appreciated work at the hospice and hospice shop. When visiting Ben, his doctor, he was asked “What did you do as a job?” and he could not remember that he had been an electrician virtually all of his life. Alzheimers combined with his weak heart, meant that he began to spend a lot of time in bed and when we visited would usually be in his pyjamas and often had to be chased out of bed. When prompted, he could recall the far past and responded well to hearing the Ying Tong song played on my smart phone. The last time I saw him he was still recognizably the same old Pete, particularly in the way he walked and stood, and I am grateful for that memory. In spite of the burden I am sure he unwittingly placed on Pat, he spent all his life at home with his family.

Peter died on 31 January 2015 when Nitha and I were in Chiengmai in Thailand visiting family. The funeral was delayed and held just after we returned. I was so pleased to see his cousins Roy Skuse, George Skuse, Barry Ashwell and Bill Ashwell there, as well as the Nation and Bryers families. Peter and Pat had been like a second set of grandparents to Grant and Vivienne Bryers’ children.


9.12 Relatives at Peter’s funeral in 2015

In photo 9.12, from the left sitting: Barry Ashwell (his wife Trish standing beside him) Pat Nation, Nitha Nation, Paul Nation, Betty Ingham, Michelle (nursing Kade), Grant Bryers (nursing Nate). From the left standing: Malcolm Smith, Ross Bryers, George Skuse, Roy Skuse, Nick Bryers, Prahm Nation, Allan Nation, Terrill Nation, Vicki Hanley.

Pat died on Wednesday 4 July 2018 when we were in Japan before going on to Thailand on our yearly visit to see family. Pat lived at home with Kris until less than a week before she died. Nitha and I used to visit her and Kris every few weeks, but could not convince her to come out for a meal with us. Prahm helped keep an eye on her finances. With the money Kris paid for board, she managed to live on her pension and even save a little. Her decline was rapid, though I am sure she tolerated a lot of discomfort and pain before that at home in her uncomplaining way.

Perhaps because I was ten years or more younger than the rest of my family and because my brothers and sister took care of me from when I was five years old, I never saw my sisters-in-law and brother-in-law as being not as closely related to me as my sister and brothers. To me, they were all equally part of my family.

## Chapter 10 Glenda Mills

| Glenda Alice Rosemary Mills | Age |
|---|---|
| Born 29 November 1944 | |
| Birth of daughter Fiona 1962 | 18 |
| Married Johnnie Marsh 14 May 1966 | 21 |
| Birth of daughter Ngarissa 1968 | 23 |
| Birth of son Bryce 1971 | 26 |
| Birth of daughter Davina 1976 | 31 |
| Death of husband Johnnie 2022 | 77 |

In late October 2025, I discovered through DNA results on Ancestry that I had a half-sister, Glenda Marsh (nee Mills), who was born in the same year as me, 1944. I was born in April, Glenda in November. Glenda's mother was Belgia Alsace Lille Mills (nee Fraser) who lived in Rangataua, three miles from Ohakune. My father owned a shop there that was run by Leighton and Maggie Taylor. Bel was married to Douglas Llwellyn Mills who died in 1947 of brain cancer, so she was still married to him at the time of Glenda's birth. The brain cancer was the cause of some violent episodes where Bel had to leave the house. Bel never told Glenda who her father was, and Glenda believed it was Douglas Mills. It was not until she was fifteen that she had some idea that she may have had a different father. Her sister Nancy was doing Glenda's hair, and she told Glenda that her father was probably Laurie Nation. Even when she cared for her mother in the final years of her mother's life, her mother did not reveal anything about Glenda's father. In 2025, Glenda's daughter, Ngarissa, gave her a subscription to Ancestry and she had her DNA tested. When Glenda appeared at the top of my DNA matches, I contacted her so we could work out our relationship. When I looked carefully at the shared matches, which included only paternal matches and included Unsworth, Cock, Virgo and Munro and no Ashwell or Mahony, it was clear that my father was the only candidate for her father.

10.1 1947 Clifton, Glenda, David

10.2 1948 Glenda at the Rangataua Sports Day

The recent passing of Bel Mills, on 26 June [1997], saw another of Rangataua's old identities' life come to an end.

Born on the very first ANZAC day, 25 April 1915, in the bedroom where she slept most of her life, she was given the names Belgia Alsace Lille (Fraser) after battle grounds in France where New Zealand soldiers had fought. She was christened in St James Church, Rangataua and followed in her mother's footsteps by becoming the organist, for 40 years, during which time she was married and had all her five children christened there also. The last service to be held in St James Church before its deconsecration was the christening of her two great-grand-daughters, where she played the organ for the last time. Bel came from a family of pioneers who, upon their arrival at Rangataua, clear-felled much of the land for many of the buildings that stand today. She had three sisters and five brothers, only one of whom, Mac Fraser, is still alive, at 86 years old. As a young man he helped build the Rangataua Hall.

Although living through times of extreme hardship the depression years and the Second World War she lived a very content, eventful life. In her early years she was able to read the teacup and is said to have given many a wise reading.

Music was important and she taught piano and wrote and recited poetry.

She was a member of the Country Women’s Institute. During this time, she travelled to Wellington to receive the honour of the CWl gold medal for years of long service, a very proud moment in her life.

Bel also belonged to three senior citizens clubs, Ohakune, Raetihi and Taumarunui. In latter years, she was a regular at the Taumarunui Daycare Centre where, along with her fellow comrades, she was lovingly cared for and entertained.

Her granddaughter, Fiona Mills, ends the obituary with one of Bel's many sayıngs: "there's a time to come and a time to go and the time to go has come".

*Ruapehu Bulletin 22 July 1997*

10.3 Bel Mills obituary

10.4 Bel, Clifton, David, Shona, Glenda

Glenda went to Rangataua Primary School, and then to Ruapehu College for two years. The local grocer, Arthur Clancy, asked Bill Mills (Glenda's step-father) if he had any daughters who wanted a job, so Glenda ended up working in a grocer's shop in Ohakune for around two years.

10.5 Glenda around 1963

When Fiona was born in 1962, Bel raised her and Glenda moved by herself to Taumarunui at the age of 18. She worked at the Cecil Hotel as a live-in worker for several years, eventually having to manage the hotel in the evening. In 1966, she married Johnnie Marsh, a saw doctor at a local mill, a very happy marriage that lasted fifty-six years until Johnnie died in 2022. At first, they lived in at the Cecil Hotel while Glenda continued her work there.

10.6 Johnnie and Glenda in the 1970s

They found a house to rent and eventually lived in it full time and bought it mortgage free some years later. When they had children, they both continued to work. When the sawmills closed, Johnnie worked on the railways for 37 years, as a ganger and eventually a track inspector. He was a keen sportsman and formed a band called Johnnie and the Cyclones. Glenda's jobs included working and managing the Hilton Motel, working at the Westend Dairy (open eight days a week) starting work at 4:30pm when Johnnie came home to look after the children, working in the Arcadia Restaurant, and working Friday and Saturday nights at the Taumarunui Railway Refreshment Rooms. No shortage of hard work. As well as raising her own children, Glenda and Johnnie fostered two children for several years.

Glenda and Johnnie had three children, Ngarissa, Bryce, and Davina. Ngarissa lives near Glenda in Taumarunui. Bryce qualified as an electrician and then served in the New Zealand army for five or six years. He moved to live with his partner in Australia around 2020. Davina lives in Hamilton.

Fiona inherited the family home in Rangataua and lives in Ohakune. She has three daughters.

10.7 Fiona, Davina, Ngarissa, Glenda and Johnnie

10.8 Bryce, Glenda's son, and Glenda

The Taumarunui Information Centre (I-Site) was started by a local group in the railway station building. It was eventually taken over by the local Borough Council. I-Site performed a variety of functions mainly supporting tourists and locals with bus and railway travel bookings, providing information, and selling tickets for local tourist sites. It contained a small souvenir shop. Glenda worked there for thirty years, a job she loved, until a late retirement in 2018.

10.9 1995 Belgia and her children Back: Shona, David, Nancy, Glenda; Front: Clifton, Bel at Bel's 80th birthday

When Bel was 80 in April 1995, the family got together for a reunion, at the Chateau Tongariro and later at Short Street in Taumarunui.

Glenda took care of her mother in Taumarunui for the last seven years of her life. She asked her mother whether Laurie Nation was her father, but her mother refused to talk about it. When her mother developed dementia, Glenda mentioned Laurie Nation and her mother said, "He used to leave me chocolate under the bridge!"

Bel died in 1997 and is buried in Rangataua Cemetery. Johnnie died in 2022. He is described in a book on prominent Taumarunui residents called *Portraits of a District*.

10.10 2025 Fiona, Helena, Aniwa, Paul, Glenda (four generations) Note the eclairs in the foreground.

# Part 2 Me

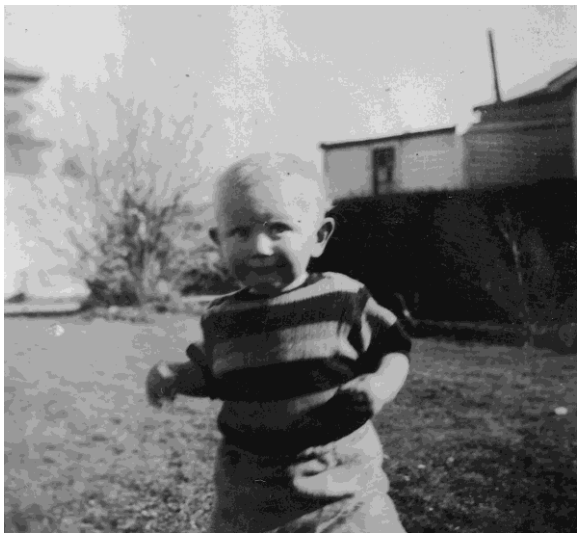
## Chapter 11 My childhood

I was born on the 28th of April 1944. I was probably born in Raetihi hospital as that was the only hospital in our area. The birth was probably at night, because my father shouted out to Betty, who was sleeping outside in a tent, that she had a new brother, to which she replied, Yippee!

11.1 Paul and his mother 1944

1944 was towards the end of the second world war, and as a child I played with a money box made from a hand grenade, a gas mask and army hats. At that time, we were quite well off, as my father had started a bakehouse supplying bread to the military camp at Waiouru, about 27 kilometres away.

11.2 Paul Nation at Ohakune



11.3 Paul at one year old

I was ten years younger than my next sibling, Peter, and this makes me suspect I was somewhat unexpected. When I was born, my father was 44 and my mother 32. I was referred to by non-family members as “the baby of the family” and this used to irritate me, especially when I was seven or eight or nine years old and clearly no longer a baby. Before my birth, my mother suggested in a letter that she thought I was probably a girl, Patricia, which would have at least given symmetry to the family – two boys and two girls. Although that was not to be, I am sure I felt welcome. From a very early age, I think I had an optimistic view of life.

11.4 Peter and Paul

My mother’s sisters and brothers and other relatives, particularly the Knowles family in Wanganui, were in regular contact with us.

11.5 Paul, Flo and Barry Ashwell (Bill and Alma Ashwell’s son)

11.6 Paul, John and Malcolm Smith

Nonetheless, I think my mother’s suicide and my father’s early death affected me, and was manifested in a fear of heights. I have seen a kind of fragility in other children who had some childhood trauma. On my first visit to Gisborne as a nine year old, Uncle Bill Mahony took me to the lookout on Kaiti Hill, and I had to crawl on to it at first because I felt it was too high up to be able to stand safely on it. When I went back to it in later years, I was surprised how unthreatening it was. Over the years, the fear of heights has been largely, but not

completely, conquered, but it may have been a result of a feeling of insecurity from my parents' deaths. Beyond that, I had no trouble seeing the positive side of things and feeling that I could deal with issues by taking some kind of control of them. That confidence probably came from the love and care from my brothers and sister, and from my childhood in Ohakune and Raetihi where there was a lot of opportunity to try things and challenge yourself, usually with positive results. I think my son Prahm also had enough of that freedom in Wellington to develop that same kind of confidence. When I think back on what we could do, it surprises me that I survived, in that the chances of disaster occurring were high. I played unsupervised in the river, climbed all over the roof of the bakehouse, spent hours playing on trees in the bush, wandered with others several miles from home, went in insecure boats on rivers and lakes without being able to swim, and went to the movies at night by myself. I was away from home for hours at a time appearing only when it was time to eat. I was almost always with friends of my age, but they were no more capable than me. There were the occasional cuts and scratches, but no broken limbs or worse.

In Ohakune, the Mangateitei River behind our house and the bush across the river were an important part of my playground. An obligatory summer task involved damming the river so that a swimming pool was formed behind the dam. The Mangateitei wandered across the Rangataua countryside before it got to Ohakune and so was reasonably warm in summer. Making a dam involved rolling and piling up the rocks in the river generally from in front of the dam. The current would get stronger as the dam neared completion and the work became more challenging. It was enormous fun. The dam never lasted longer than the next fall of rain, and then it would be rebuilt. Even at that time, I realised that we spent more time damming the creek than swimming in the pool. Occasionally, rivals would wreck the dam. Once the dam was built, children and adults would come from other parts of town to swim. The willows and long grass by the stream were the changing rooms, one side for boys one side for girls. We would light a fire by the river and cook potatoes in the ashes. Generally stolen from our neighbour, Pop White's, garden by digging into the side of his mulched up rows. My close friend, Gordon McIlroy, had learned how to tickle trout, and sometimes small trout cooked in a frying pan with a folding handle were part of the outdoor meal.

There were set places for the dams, largely determined by the banks on each side of the river. The most popular place was behind Davis's, where the A-frame now stands, or a bit further up the river, just down from the bridge on the Rangataua Road where the big carrot now stands. No-one ever drowned in the pool, and that was largely because it was never that deep, and the current would carry you to shallower water,

Another major project that went on year after year was building the bonfire for Guy Fawkes. It was built just over the back fence of our house between the fence and the river. This was a serious bonfire and included old car tyres from the local garages, large tree trunks, waste timber, and anything else that would burn. It would take about a month to build and the embers from the fire would still be hot two or three days later. However, like the dams, the building took much more time than the using. It was largely built by children, including teenagers, but the occasional adult would turn up with something to go on it. There would be a guy of sorts, but that was not a major concern. It was lit on November 5$^{th}$ as soon as it got dark. There were plenty of firecrackers, some of them fairly lethal -- "Light touch paper and stand well clear." One of the thrills the next day involved searching for unexploded crackers and trying to set them off. Johnny, always generous, used to put on a supper for those who

came, and as it was the largest bonfire in Ohakune, a lot came. Occasionally, the top of a tree in the bush would catch fire. I learned early in life that car tyres had reinforcing wire in them.

I have few if any memories of my very early life. I think my mother and I took a board from one of the bread vans and made a bridge to an island in the Mangateitei River behind our house near the Raetihi Road bridge. I vaguely recall playing in the sandpit by the back door of the house, and I recall falling out of the van on the way to Ohakune Junction (very near Steve's present house) because the van door could not latch properly. I recall being carefully placed on the couch in the living room. Mike Dillon told me in later life that he was driving and felt very guilty about it although it was not his fault. I do however recall more clearly some of my early days at school.

11.7 Paul at the Austens

11.8 Long pants with no hangover

One of my closest friends was Nellie Austen whose husband was Tom Austen, the blacksmith. The blacksmith's shop was directly across the road from our house, and I recall sitting on the front steps of our house watching it go up in flames as the Fire Brigade battled to put it out. John was a member of the Fire Brigade, and he was dashing in and out of our house to get drinks for the firemen. It was many years before the burned shell of the building was pulled down. Tommy had built a smaller blacksmith shop with a forge behind it. The Austens lived just four houses up Clyde Street from the blacksmith's shop.

11.9 Peter, Mrs Austen, Paul in 1969

I used to wander up to see her from an early age. She would be working in her garden or in the kitchen, and we would sit around her living room table. She had a cuckoo clock on the

wall. She made me my first pair of long pants which I was very proud of. When she was making them, I explained that I wanted them with a “hangover” like Tom’s. What I meant was that I wanted them made so that my stomach would hang over the top of the pants like Tom’s did. I still have a small children’s book that she bought for me. She always got quite excited when she heard *The stone outside Dan Murphy’s door* on the radio and would ring her son Mac Hancock or others to get them to turn on their radio and listen to it.

Like most of the houses in Ohakune, the house faced the road. However, Mrs Austen had a real love of the mountain (pronounced moun-tain) and could look at it through her kitchen window. It clearly brought her joy to see it. She had a cat and bought fresh cat’s meat for the cat.

I was quite intrigued by the way she shopped, which did not involve going to the shop but involved ringing up Chan Fung’s shop at the Junction and placing an order, which would then be delivered.

She always had plenty of time to talk to me, and when I was a young teenager, I would go and stay with her and Tom in their caravan at Mission Bay at Lake Taupo where they spent a couple of months or more each year in the summer. The same people would come to Mission Bay each year and each person had their regular spot. Even though they were from different parts of the North Island, they ended up knowing each other as a small community. Tom would carve rashers of bacon off a long roll that he had hanging outside. The caravan had an awning, and I slept in a bed under that. Friends from Ohakune would call in on them and spend part of the day talking and swimming before heading home.

She was a very keen gardener and was a member of the garden club. I particularly liked the snap-dragons because you could get them to open their mouth by pressing on the sides. There was also another flower where you could take its cap of so the petals would open. She planted a kowhai in front of her house which grew quite large, and she enjoyed sitting under it. She would talk about the things that she enjoyed such as the mountain, her garden and the kowhai, and I think I learned to share that enjoyment of the here and now.

The Ross family lived next to the Austens, on the corner of Clyde and Arawa Streets. Peter was very friendly with Gavin Ross. I upset Gavin one day. He had taken me for a ride on his bicycle and as we were coming back to the army hut in our backyard where Peter slept, Gavin said “Here he comes!” to which I echoed “Hairy bums!”

11.10 Paul and his book

## Chapter 12 Primary School

I began school in Ohakune, and after my father died, moved to Raetihi for four years. In 1956, I moved back to Ohakune to go to Ruapehu College. At school, I was always the smallest in my class, typically at the end of the row in the school photograph.

### Ohakune Primary School

I must have already had almost a year at school when my mother died, and was early in my third year at school when my father died. I am sure that I went to Gisborne to be with my grandparents at one of these times, most likely just after my father died, as I accompanied my grandmother as she gave religious instruction at some Gisborne primary schools. I was responsible for placing the various religious figures on the felt board as she talked. I wondered at the time why the children in the class had to go to school when I didn't.

At Ohakune School I remember singing ten green bottles as the lucky kids behind the blackboard let the cutout bottles drop. At playtime, there was always a mad race for a particular toy car to play with in the school sandpit. Donald Macintosh, whose father had also died not too long before, consulted me while in the sandpit on how long it took for a body to rot away. I also remember the boys' toilets and trying to piss as far as possible up the wall.


12.1 The newspaper man

If the weather allowed, we gathered outside the main building for assembly, to recite the Lord's Prayer, sing the national anthem, and recite the pledge to the flag. I had no idea of the words and was convinced that there was something about cowboys and Indians in the Lord's Prayer. The national anthem did mention "the Nations' van". In those days, we also had to recite allegiance to our country. "I salute the flag, the emblem of my country, the symbol of

liberty and justice.” In the time for art, I drew a horse, but because I could not draw its head, I had it eating grass behind a fence, the fence conveniently obscuring its head. Tommy Tucker (not his real surname, probably Rongonui) was much better at drawing than me and drew a rocking horse, which I quite admired. I soon moved out of the primers block and into the main building. I think I had no trouble with reading and read a lot of Classic Comics.

One day we were told that boys should not walk around outside with their arms around each other’s shoulders. I was puzzled by this, because it was a fairly common thing to do to put an arm over your mate’s shoulder and walk around the main school building often in a group of three. I imagine it was to stop us becoming homosexuals!

The Korean War began in 1950 and there was a big gathering at the school (the primary school and high school were in the same grounds) to farewell Derek Tocker, and I think one other, who was off to fight in Korea.

It was at Ohakune Primary that I had my first contact with English as a second language. Some new Chinese speaking students had arrived at the school who knew virtually no English. Joe Bryers (one of the teachers at the school) used to get them into the school bus (for lack of a school room) and give then some instruction, while he sat in the driver’s seat. Young Lim used to bring his lunch to school in a cardboard box covered with Chinese writing and I was fascinated by this. I tried to copy some of the characters, but he was not so happy about that and moved it away.


12.2 Primer 3 Ohakune School 1950 (names in Appendix 7) End of the row as usual

The most memorable teacher I had in Ohakune Primary was Mr McLeod, probably in Standard 2. He was full of fun and a very efficient teacher. When he wrote on the blackboard, he raised one of his feet so that we could see the sole of his shoe. It had a circle pattern on the

heel, and he said that it was like an extra eye so that he could see what we were up to. We half-believed him. The most memorable student was Richard Bishop who would start fighting the teacher if they tried to strap him.


12.3 Primer 4 Ohakune School 1951 Still end of the row

The school caretaker was called Uncle Tim, and he would sit in the boiler room at play time and kids would come to get him to cut their apple in half so they could share it.

In the late 1940s and early fifties, large families were still the norm, and there were always plenty of children to play with. My best friends in Ohakune were Ken George, Gordon McIlroy and Charlie Pattison. Both Gordon and Charlie went to the Catholic School.

12.4 Paul and Barry Ashwell, probably in Wanganui

Raymond Davies was also a good mate, but because he lived further away, we did not meet so often. Raymond and I planned to build a bus, and every so often he would turn up with a sugar sack containing greasy car parts. We never got very far with making the bus.

Gordon McIlroy was destined to be a mechanic like his oldest brother Brian. He was also a remarkable hunter. At some point I got a slug gun, and he was by far the best shot. We also got involved in possum trapping, although my heart was never really in it. We used gin traps which grabbed the possums by the leg in steel jaws. Each “token” – the ears plus a longish piece of the pelt from the back – was worth 2/6 which seemed a lot of money in those days. The pelts had to be stretched out and dried. A good unscarred skin could be sold as a whole skin and was worth more. Killing the possum caught in the trap involved whacking it over the head with a heavy stick. It was a fairly gruesome enterprise, and I was glad to get out of it. As an adult, Gordon used to earn extra money by providing wild pork for restaurants. My understanding was that he did not use a gun but simply used a knife.

Charlie Pattison lived next to the McIlroys near the bridge on Rangataua Road, opposite the carrot park. His father Dinny drove a horse and cart for many years and used it to collect scraps for his pigs. Charlie’s mother was deaf, but went to the movies regularly. Dinny later worked as the cleaner in the bakehouse. Charlie was the youngest in the family with three older brothers Maurice, Ivan and Denny, and two sisters Molly and Nessie. Charlie was also in the Boy Scouts like me, when we were in secondary school, and we went to the Pan-Pacific Jamboree in Auckland in 1959. Charlie became a builder and worked largely in Wellington.

Ken George was the son of Ralph who worked in the Bakehouse. He was the youngest in the family with brothers Ray, Allan and George. He was a good rugby player and got into the Rangitikei Reps.

12.5 Peter Nation, Ken George, Paul Nation, Allan George

One of our favourite places to play was in our back shed. The shed gained some fame because in the Ohakune flood of 1942, it got lifted off its foundation and was deposited several metres away closer to Raetihi Road. This replacement was done so gently that the numerous glass jars of preserves stayed unbroken on the shelves.

At one time, someone was peeling apples or peaches for preserving and had left the very sharp knife and fruit on a shelf just inside the back door of our house. I had a go at peeling and badly cut my middle finger. I still have the scar which hurts if it gets bumped.

My father had trouble with ulcers and used to take a white laxative medicine which had a nice taste. I knew its purpose, and when non-one was around, I would go to the outside toilet behind the shed and open the toilet door. I would then open the back door of our house so that

I had a free run to the outside toilet. I would climb on the sink bench, take spoonful of medicine, and then race for the toilet.

The back shed was full of unwanted clothing, lots of old magazines, a lawn mower and some tools. The magazines were largely copies of the *Illustrated London News* with war-time pictures of the London blitz and the second world war. Fascinating stuff.

We also played in the bakehouse, especially up in the loft on the large sacks of flour. For one Christmas I got a Swanee whistle, made out of metal. It consisted of a long whistle with a plunger. By moving the plunger, you could alter the note. Someone discovered by blowing really hard and moving the plunger quickly you could whistle louder than any farmer could whistle. We used it to whistle out to cars from the loft window, trying to make them stop.

12.6 Paul posing

The bush across the river was also a favourite place to play. Some trees were covered by old man's beard, and we would clamber up them pretending we were on a ship, rocking the tree.

Another favourite place was the large front lawn of our house. We played games of soccer, rugby, tag and Queenie-Seenie. Queenie-Seenie involved trying to get from one end of the lawn to the other without being caught by the people in the middle.


12.7 Standard 2 Ohakune School 1952 (I am not in this photo)

At the back of the house behind the toilet, we had a plum tree, and our place was particularly popular when the plum tree had fruit. Peter used to use a length of downpipe to pick the fruit.

I remember my childhood as being very happy and full of mischief. I was never physically punished. I had plenty of friends, a well-off family, and people who cared for me. School was never a big problem. I did well academically and had minimal bullying. Pat Wiperi used to chase me after school, threatening to hit me with her schoolbag whenever she saw me, but I think she would not have known what to do with me if she caught me. The fun was in the chase.

**Raetihi Primary School**

Betty and Rex were married before my father died, and for a while, they lived in the house in Ohakune. In early 1953, I moved with Betty and Rex to Raetihi. It was early enough in the year to get a first half-year report card from Raetihi School, and late enough for my lack of swimming skills not to be noticed. Johnny and Audrey were married in May 1953, and the move may have been to give them some privacy. As soon as I went to Raetihi School, the McDonnell twins, Billy and Jimmy, became my friends, and I felt no worry about going to this different school. I was in Standard 3 and my teacher was Doug Wright. I think it was his first year as a teacher, or at least his first year as a teacher at Raetihi School. His family came from Raetihi.

12.8 Standard 4 Raetihi School 1954 (Paul at the end of the third row)

We lived in a one room shack behind the Waimarino Hotel. There was a single bed and a double bed in the room, and a corner with one of those small free-standing ovens with a square element on top. We had a set of three green triangular pots that fitted together to make a circle, so you could fit all three on the element at once. We lived there for about a year until the house on the corner of Ward and King Streets was built, behind the carrying company. I got to know Joe Bryers' children reasonably well, although all except David were quite a bit older than me. Lance Mackay lived next door. Rex's father Fred lived in the hotel. We occasionally ate in the dining room of the hotel like guests, but mostly Betty cooked.

When I lived in Raetihi, on some weekends I took the bus to Ohakune for the weekend to stay with Johnny and play with my Ohakune friends.

12.9 Susan Bryers and Paul at Raetihi

I liked Doug Wright as a teacher, and at the end of the school year, I gave him a gift of a handkerchief with a D embroidered on it. He had revealed that at school his nickname was Dodger, so in the accompanying note, I said the D was for Douglas and Dodger.

I had several good friends at Raetihi – Billy and Jimmy McDonnell, Mervyn Reynolds (who took my bike to pieces), Tommy Punch, Mervyn Chan, Barry and Kerry Drinkwater, Billy Edwards and Allan Garmonsway.

With the help of the McDonnells, I made a vegetable garden beside the house in Ward Street. Levering out the big clumps of grass was difficult. The vegetables grew well helped by the sweepings from the sheep crates.

The McDonnells were terrific singers, and were guaranteed to win any of the regular talent quests held in the picture theatre. They tended to be very nervous before singing, but once they began, the harmony was great.

Raetihi was a prosperous town at the time, well patronized by the farmers. Friday night was the time everyone came to town, and the main street really buzzed then. In several ways, Ohakune seemed like the poor relative – no sewerage, no town water supply, no swimming pool, and fewer shops. The high school however was at Ohakune.

I had Laurie Smith as a teacher in Raetihi School, and I must have had one more teacher, but I have absolutely no memory of who it was. In Standard 6, our teacher was the much feared Des O'Donnell, an ex-All Black. He ruled with the strap, and couple of the more disruptive students in the school, Peter Rerekura and Noel Clark were also in his class to make sure they behaved. I think in my year, I was the first person to get the strap. He said I wasn't paying attention (although I could repeat what he had previously said). I figured out much later that one discipline technique was to choose the meekest and mildest person in the class, and punish them. The rest of the class would think, "If he did that to Nation, what is he going to do to me?" In spite of that, I found he was a good teacher. My times tables were thoroughly learned. He used to lecture on us about how to behave out of school. He used to read to us. The reading was from a book called *Hunter* by J. A. Hunter, who was a game hunter in Africa. At times, he would stumble over the reading. When I bought a copy for myself, I discovered he was censoring those parts unsuitable for our still unformed minds.


12.10 Standard 6 Raetihi School 1956 with Des O'Donnell. End of the row

He was also into physical demonstration to make things stick, so we were out in the playground running in our orbit (the boys), or spinning on our axis (the girls, several of whom succumbed to dizziness). When we had to turn the denominator upside down and multiply, he was rather regretful because the previous year he had a student called Donnelly who he grabbed by the ankles and turned upside down -- turn Donnelly upside down and multiply. At a Ruapehu College school reunion, Joan Marshall told me about Noel Clark who in later life had trouble with anger problems and who was advised to seek out those from his past who had mistreated him and come to terms with them. Noel sought out Des O'Donnell and said, "At home I was being bashed and beaten, and when I came to class, I was bashed and beaten." Looking at Clarky in the school photographs he is clearly unhappy. I just wish that I had been sensitive enough to notice that then and do something to support him. My niece, Susan Bryers, was much more proactive than me. When she was at school, she went to the biggest bully in the school and said, "Will you be my friend?" She never had any problems from then on, and I feel sure it had a positive effect on him.

I was dux of the school, with Allan Garmonsway a close second. I was only ever top of my class twice, in Standard Six and Form Seven, both times when it mattered. It was more accidental than deliberate though. I never studied with the aim of being first.

When I was in Standard 5 or 6, I worked at Fagg's (then still at the BNZ end of Seddon Street) along with Barry Pritchard. The work mainly involved repacking large quantities of goods into smaller quantities – putting wheat for chickens into paper bags, bottling raw linseed oil, and unpacking crates. It was good experience for me. Later I worked with Ken Garmonsway in a fruit and vegetable shop that he had set up with Keith Kui and the Perkins brothers. Ken ran the shop while the others supplied the fruit and vegetables as payload from the Wellington markets and from their own market gardens. The shop was next to the drycleaners, across the road from Maher's Drapery. When Ken pulled out of the business, Anna Chung took over running the shop. She did not really need my help, as the shop was never that busy and it eventually closed.

## Chapter 13 Secondary school

When I finished primary school in Raetihi, I returned to Ohakune to go to college. Ohakune District High School had split from the primary school and was in new buildings in Tainui Street. It was now Ruapehu College with a board of governors. I started there in 1957 in the third year of its existence.

The college served a wide area, from Waiouru to Horopito and National Park to Raetihi, and there were numerous school buses, mainly driven by school-teachers, who earned extra money for doing the driving. Unlike primary school, there was a dark navy blue school uniform, boys a cap, girls a beret. When I was in the seventh form, there were army cadets from Waiouru who wore civilian clothes to attend school, and so the male students in the same classes could choose to wear civilian clothing too. Not all chose to do so, but I did.


13.1 1961 Ruapehu College prefects

The school was classified as country-service and teachers were obligated to teach at least two years at a country service school early in their career. Some teachers chose to do their country service at the very beginning of their career, and so we often had some teachers who were not very experienced. We tended to misbehave in their classes.

I was the smallest person in the school. I found out not so long ago from Allan Garmonsway that the school first fifteen rugby team had decided that I was not to be bullied, and so I was not. I was pretty cheeky but concluded that it was my natural wit and cunning that protected me, not knowing about the protection order.

I was never any good at sports, largely because I could see the potential for physical harm. Each year we had a cross-country race usually involving starting at the front of the college, going around Ohakune Junction and returning to the back of the college. We had one or two practice runs and the teachers used to time these runs as a way of deciding on handicapping. Some of us would cheat like mad on these practices, taking shortcuts, which sometimes put us in the middle of swamps. As a result, when the cross-country race began, I with Errol Sue and a few others were sent off about four minutes before the others. Although I was not a good runner, I was determined, and kept pushing myself. When we came into the home

straight, I was in second place. Johnny was watching the race and started to get very excited. It was clear that the person in third was going to overtake me as I had very little energy left. Nonetheless, I did come in third to everyone's astonishment. My greatest fear was that my performance would get me into the team that would run against Taihape College in a week or so, and I certainly did not want to run that distance again. Fortunately, my achievement was properly seen as the result of poor handicapping.

I think it was when I was at secondary school that I got a pogo stick. I was not that good at using it, partly because I was probably too light. However, when I got up one morning Audrey showed me a neat small round hole in the kitchen floor where Len Godfrey, a rather big man, had tried it and the bottom part had gone right through the wooden floor.

Eric Dixon had made a boat for his two sons Graham and Ken out of a 44 gallon drum. It had a pointed nose and an outrigger with a half-gallon container on the end. We used to play in it on the lake at the Lakes Reserve just below the cemetery a couple of kilometres from Ohakune. One day we cycled out there and could not find our boat. I found out several years later that my brother John and someone else had figured out how dangerous it was (I could not swim a stroke) and went out there and sank it. A wise move. They figured it was pointless telling us not to do it.

I had a bicycle which Johnny had given me for my twelfth birthday. I could go down to Rush's shop and choose any bike I wanted. I eventually painted the bike by painting a teal coloured background, and then covering up the lousy paint job by drawing colourful ivy twining around the frame with leaves of various colours, much admired by Charlie Pattison's father. Gordon McIlroy, Charlie Pattison, Ken George and I built a bike track among the manuka near the railway where the big carrot park now stands. We built cambered corners and had great fun doing time trials and having races. In a race between Gordon McIlroy (who was fearless) and Ken Dixon, Gordon managed to get his pedal caught in Ken Dixon's spokes and wrecked Ken's front wheel.

In my early years at secondary school, I cycled to school, but when I was in the sixth and seventh form, I walked. The route involved walking to the railway line just over the road bridge on Rangataua Road (not far from where the carrot now is), and then following the railway line to the back of the primary school, and then crossing the field behind the tuck shop to the college. There was always someone to walk with and a well-beaten track across the field. Occasionally, going home, we would cut through the primary school. In magpie breeding season that could be a bit hazardous.

13.2 1959 Ruapehu College Form five

The school year always began with cadets (military training). This involved getting issued with a woollen khaki uniform which was very uncomfortable to wear. The typical excuse for not wearing it was that it was at the dry-cleaners. I doubt any uniform ever went to the dry cleaners. We were formed into platoons, given a rank (I was always private), did drill and had shooting practice using 303 rifles. The shooting practice was initially up at Hussey's clearing on the Mountain Road, and later on at the rifle range which had been built at the back of the school. We would have instructors from the military camp at Waiouru. The rifle was about as big as me and I was afraid of its kick. However, practice with the slug gun had made me a reasonable shot. The instructor saw me struggling with the size of the rifle and gave me a sandbag. I then shot a bullseye. "When you go to war sonny, you take a sandbag with you."

In 1959, when I was in form five, the week of military training involved a week spent living in the army camp at Waiouru. It was great fun. Each platoon had its own room with twelve beds. The food was good and there was plenty of it. The training was interesting, not just drill. About five or six of us smaller less violent people were assigned to the signals corps. I am not sure why because the radios were enormous. At one point when the radios broke down, those of us who were boy scouts (me, John Palmer and Colin Palmer) used semaphore to communicate. I think part of the reason for the time at Waiouru was to encourage some to consider joining the army when leaving school.

While at secondary school, I joined the Boy Scouts. We met each week in the Scout Hall in Lee Street on the way to the Junction. There were about thirty of us. We worked for various badges, such as the first aid badge (also called the snake charmer's badge because of its symbol of a snake entwined around a stick), woodcraftsman etc. We went on camps and treks and learned a lot. In 1959, we went to the jamboree in Auckland. That involved quite a lot of

preparation. The long heavy ridge poles and the support poles for the tents were painted in our troop colours. The tents were dyed in similar colours. The bulk of the work was done by Jack Palmer our Scout leader. His sons, Colin and John were good friends of mine. Jack was a quiet selfless man who did a lot for the community in his understated way. He was an excellent scout master, always calm, and knowledgeable, and had the respect of us and the wider community. To qualify for the jamboree, you had to already have a certain number of nights of camping. Malcolm Mountfort and Charlie Pattison did not have enough, so the three of us spent a few nights camping near Jack Palmer's place. At some point, I had become the troop leader, so I was responsible for those two. Charlie used to get cramp in his arm at night while sleeping and used to lash out with his arm to relieve it. It was quite dangerous sleeping in the same tent. Occasionally we had combined camps with scouts from other troops. Once we had a camp in Hussey's clearing up the Mountain Road. The Scouts were great for developing self-reliance because you had to learn how to cook, how to clean up, how to wash your clothes, how to build shelters and put up tents, how to tie knots and do splices. You also had to learn to work together and get on with others. I became a Senior Scout (a red beret instead of a green one), but there were only three of us and little to do and I soon lost interest.

When in the Sixth Form in 1960, I joined the Waimarino Pipe Band. I think this was partly a result of my friendship with Mike Gould who was already a member. I was a drummer. By now I had my driving licence, and drove the bread vans when the other drivers were on holiday. The Pipe Band met in a hall near the railway at Ohakune Junction, and in our Morris Cowley bread van, I collected various members between Ohakune and the Junction to go to practice. I was a pretty hopeless drummer, but I was good at drill and could remember all the beats, which made up for my lack of talent. I had previously tried joining the Ohakune Brass Band, but gave up when, after several weeks of trying, I couldn't get a decent sound out of the cornet. Ken George and his brother Georgie were much more capable.

13.3 The Waimarino Highland Pipe Band (me taking the photo?)

Keith Ferguson was chief piper, and he ruled the band with firm discipline. His wife, Grace, was in charge of the drummers. The ages of the people in the band ranged from about fifty or sixty down to eleven or twelve. We were well drilled and performed well in occasional

competitions. We travelled to various places to play in centenaries and other celebrations. New Year was our big night of the year and the New Year Dance at Ohakune Junction was our major fund-raising event. From about 8pm to midnight there was a dance, with the pipe band occasionally playing, then at midnight the band would play and lead everyone out on to the main street, marching up and down the main street. We had to take off our hats before they were snatched off our heads. One New Year, Harry Sutton and George Hepi, both big men, took over policing the ruckus. About 1 am people would head home, and the band would then go around people's houses, largely by invitation but not always and would play outside their house, get a drink and hopefully a donation, and then would move on to the next house on our list. Being woken out of a deep, partly-drunken sleep at 3 am by a pipe band starting up outside your bedroom window can be rather unsettling. I still remember getting home about 5:30 am on New Year's Day, my shirt soaked with beer, frozen and exhausted.

13.4 The Waimarino Highland Pipe Band ready to roll

While in the pipe band, I learned Scottish country dancing. This involved several intricate dances but turned out to be a lot of fun. Lincoln Gould and I kicked around together around that time. Lincoln was also a drummer. We went to several places with the band and occasionally travelled to join other bands when the whole band did not go.

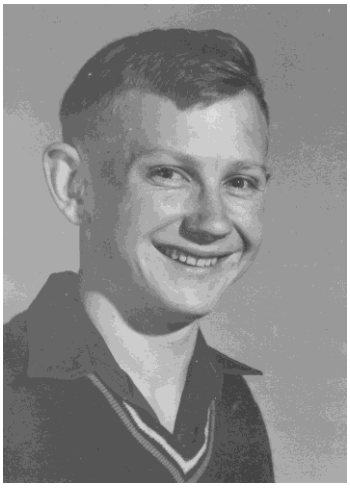
School was not a great challenge to me, but when I went to university, I found that I was not at all prepared for academic study. In some ways, this was not surprising as very few people went on to university from Ruapehu College. On the other hand, in my seventh form year, there were only three of us, and I was the only student in some of my classes. It was an ideal situation for individual tuition, but it did not work out like that.

In my fifth form year in 1959, our music teacher, Miss Henderson, got permission to put on *The Pirates of Penzance*. This was a great idea. Each class was shortened by five minutes, and the accumulated time was used at the end of the day for practice for the performance. The practice could not occur after school hours because a large proportion of the school had to go home on the school buses. The best singers in the school were found (Mike Gould, Joan Marshall, Ronnie Billington, Vera Brailey) and roles were assigned. We really enjoyed the preparation and public performance. Almost sixty years later at a Ruapehu College reunion, those who were in the production had a special photograph taken. The experience clearly

stayed with those who were involved. I can still remember most of the songs including those that I did not have to sing – Modern Major General, Poor Wandering One, Tarantara, Apprentice to a Pirate, and so on.

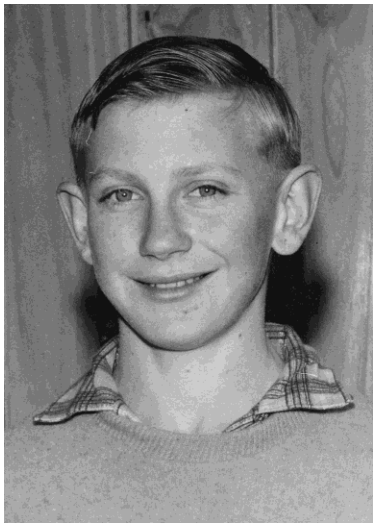
13.5 1959 The Pirates of Penzance: Paul and Chris Field

On reflection, the choice of the Pirates of Penzance was typical of our education system of the time. The syllabus was very England-centred. Many of our coursebooks, such as *English Today* by Ronald Ridout came without adaptation from England, French was the foreign language (*En Marche*), history involved the intensive study of English history, and our school song-book was full of the songs sung in schools in England (The Eton Boating Song, On the Ball, John Peel). At the time, we thought little about this, although I did reflect a few years later that although I studied French for five years, the nearest I came to a native speaker of French during that time was someone down the other end of the platform of the Ohakune Junction railway station about to get back on board a train. Some of the talented musicians and singers at Ruapehu College, like Chris Tonihi and the McDonnells, did not get a look in in the Pirates of Penzance. It was not their style.



13.6 1959

13.7 Early 1961 with Mike Gould at Mission Bay Taupo



13.8 1961 School prefect

While I was at Ruapehu College, one of our most respected teachers, Trevor Edmond, was writing his Master of Education thesis for Victoria University. He sometimes spoke about it, and there was the occasional visitor who would sit in on a class who was doing a related thesis. When I eventually got to university, I tracked down the thesis and read it. It was a revelation to me, mainly because he pointed out how the high status well paid jobs in Ohakune were not held by locals but by outsiders on a career path to higher things. These jobs included the publican, the bank manager, the head of the railway station, the head of the post office, the headmaster of the primary school and the principal of the college. When his wife, Lauris Edmond, wrote her autobiography, one of the three volumes was set in Ohakune. She mentioned the thesis. “When we lived in Ohakune, Trevor was writing his thesis. At times, I thought we would die of it.” As one who has supervised many theses, I can sympathise with her.

13.9 1960 Sixth and seventh formers

Back row: Keith Peacock, John Dive, Ian Meredith. Middle row: Bill McLay, Brian Eades, Chris Field, Mike Gould, Tom Mowat, Ray Kaanga, Ian Hemara. Front row: Don Macintosh, Alan Garmonsway, Margaret Chan, Jean Wise, David Paranihi, Paul Nation.

In the following year, three six formers went on to the seventh form – Don Macintosh, Keith Peacock and Paul Nation.

As soon as I was fifteen years old, I got my driving licence. At that age I was still short and still at the end of the row in school photographs. When I went to the Borough Council office to register for the driving test, the clerk was surprised to see someone so small going for the test. He double-checked my proof of age and wrote and underlined in the appointment book "Paul Nation is fifteen years of age". I passed on the first go, but I had had some professional driving lessons in Palmerston North in a dual-control car plus lessons from Johnny. When I drove after getting my licence, people passing me in other cars would do a double-take, because it looked as if the car was driverless. I looked through the steering wheel rather than over it.

Johnny's ulterior motive in getting me to drive was so that I could take over bread deliveries when the other drivers had a holiday. Thus, in the school holidays I ended up delivering bread around Horopito and Pokaka, and around the houses in Waiouru military camp. The Horopito-Pokaka run should have taken about two and a half hours. It always took four and a half, because everybody wanted to talk. Those living there were rather isolated, and they wanted news from town and social contact. At Christmas time, I accompanied the regular driver because after deliveries at a few houses, the driver would be drunk, and I had to take over the driving.

I only had a couple of accidents, and both involved turning the wheel too early while backing out of a parking spot and catching the mudguard on a van or lamppost.

Occasionally I worked in the bakehouse, making pies, buns, and loading the ovens.

There was never any doubt that I would go to university to become a teacher. In my last year of secondary school, I applied for a teacher's studentship and got it.

## Chapter 14 University

### My first year at university and Weir House

In 1962 at the age of 17, I left Ohakune to go to Victoria University of Wellington to begin my university study. Fortunately, I had been accepted into Weir House, so I immediately knew around ninety people, all male. Because I had a teacher's scholarship, I had to be in Wellington a bit earlier than most because there was an orientation course for the studentship holders. One of the people running the course was P. G. Morris, who had been principal of Wellington Teachers' College. He had also been one of the interviewers for the scholarship. When we first gathered, he went around our group of probably fifty or sixty people, saying our names, all of which he had memorized. He gave us an excellent piece of advice that I fortunately followed. "There is something called a superannuation scheme you can join which is for your retirement. I know you are far from thinking about retirement, but you should join it." I did, and later even bought back service when I returned after temporarily leaving the scheme.

I decided to study English, History, Psychology and French reading knowledge. I had decided on Psychology rather than Education because of what some resident of Weir House had said about Education being a bit vague. I naively repeated this to P.G. Morris who was a bit taken aback (He was an education lecturer), but he let me do Psychology. It turned out to be one of the most useful and interesting courses I studied.

Life in the big city was exciting for a small-town boy. In my first week or two in Wellington, I went through several 10 trip cable car tickets. There were plenty of distractions to stop me doing the necessary study. I went to French reading knowledge for a few classes and thought this was easy, so I did not go to many more. I did not read all the set texts for English, although I did read *Don Quixote* because that was a picaresque novel like the set text *Joseph Andrews*. In my first English tutorial, we were given a short text to read, and to my horror, I realized I did not understand it. At secondary school, I had had no instruction in writing essays and struggled to work out what they wanted, especially in history. I noted that those who came from city schools had a much better grasp of what to do and they could sit down the night before an essay was due and write something that got them a respectable B grade.

My assigned roommates in Weir House were Hugh Wilde and Dick Nightingale, and we had a harbour-facing room on the third floor. Hugh had the inside room, and Dick and I shared the slightly larger outer room. Dick also had a studentship. Hugh was doing science majoring in Geology, and Dick and I were doing Arts.

14.1 Dick Nightingale, Paul Nation, Hugh Wilde

One kind of entertainment was a Weir House Association meeting. When entertainment was short, someone would schedule a meeting. We would spend an hour or two debating some proposal which would be eventually passed and added to the Weir House Association constitution which stretched to several pages. The constitution meant nothing. The entertainment was in the debate. In my third year at Weir, a well-meaning commerce student came up with a one-page constitution which was elegant and short but missed the whole point.

When I left Ohakune, Keith Ferguson the Pipe Major of the Waimarino Pipe Band gave me the address of Dick Mott who used to be in the band but who had moved to work in Wellington. Through Dick, I immediately became a member of the Wellington Post Office Pipe Band. The lead drummer was Ross Winter who was also a drummer in the Air Force Band. Ross lived with his parents in Rawhiti Terrace, just above the university, and we occasionally hung out together, and I would go to the occasional Air Force Band performance. One of my first outings with the band was Anzac Day 1962. We were leading the Boer War veterans. There were about twelve of them, most with walking sticks as they were in their eighties. One said, “Don’t play too fast lads, we may have trouble keeping up with you.”

We also occasionally played in the sound shell at the botanical gardens.

14.2 1962 Wellington Post Office Pipe Band (Dick Mott at the front, me at the back)

For a bet, I wore my kilt to university for a week. The quest to stand out, I guess. At the end of my second year at university, I left the band.

The beginning of the academic year involved initiation. This was a strange mixture of nakedness, a kind of tribunal, stunts, drinking and photographs, involving the second year residents giving the freshers a hard time. The purported aim was to develop house spirit, and it succeeded to a small degree, although the kind of spirit it encouraged did not help study or academic growth. The stunts involved things like measuring the width of the entrance to the Embassy Theatre using a slice of luncheon sausage and dressed in a loin cloth.

Weir House had its own haka. By today's standards it would be an embarrassment, and it was done without any understanding of the words or any respect for Maori tradition. Fortunately, it was not performed often, mainly at capping. The haka party costume consisted of sugar sacks. Capping involved stunts, some quite clever. There was a partly successful attempt to paint footsteps from Queen Victoria's statue in Kent and Cambridge Terraces to the Taj Mahal toilets (now the Welsh Dragon) down the street. There were lion paw prints painted from the cenotaph near Parliament to a pile of bones nearby.

There were occasional raids on women's hostels which included the Dental Nurses' hostel in the Glen (now the Indonesian Embassy), Vic A on the Terrace, and Helen Lowry Hall in Karori. Security within Weir was not good as some residents had girl friends in the hostels. One raid on Helen Lowry found the Matron and girls waiting with biscuits and a cup of tea. A bit deflating, especially if you are dressed in a sugar sack.

During my first year, while a group of us were heading off to play a game of basketball against Helen Lowry women's hostel, I got elbowed down a bank by Brush Tunnicliffe and broke my right arm. This then became an excuse not to do assignments, because theoretically I could not write. This was not a good idea because it further reduced the amount of academic work I did. At the end of the first year, I headed back to Ohakune to await the results of the final exams. At that time, the assignment work did not contribute to the final grade. Assignment work got you terms (permission to sit the final exam), but the final grade was determined by the end of year exam. My first grade to arrive was French reading knowledge

– Fail! 27%. I lived in fear until the other grades arrived – History 48 and 52 average 50 C Pass. English B2, Psychology B2. Phew! I vowed to change my ways.

I think it was at the end of this year that I worked in Gould's bakehouse, Ohakune Bakery, for a few months during the university break. John Gould was a university graduate and sympathetic towards my request for summer work. He gave me plenty of overtime. My Weir House roommates typically worked for Watties in the Hawkes Bay or for a freezing works. Because I had a studentship, I did not need to work, but it was what was done when you were at university. I already knew several of the people in the bakehouse (John Gould, Glenn McIntyre, Malcolm Matthews, Peter and Mort Deadman, Alan Pram, Dave Evans) and quickly got to know the rest (Murdoch Henare, Glen Ennis, Bill Mills). It was quite hard repetitive work, but I had no problem with it. I woke up in the middle of the night early on and found myself going through the motions of throwing dough into the hopper of the divider. Everyone in the bakehouse got on well with each other and enjoyed being at work. It was easy to talk with others while working.

**My second year at university and Weir House**

In my second year (1963), I was assigned to share rooms on C floor with Tawatchai Bhengsri, a Thai student studying Commerce who was a few years older than the rest of us. Our two rooms were on the top floor at the northern end of the building. That was the beginning of a friendship that lasted over sixty years, until Tawatchai died in 2024. I was in Thailand at the time and was able to attend his funeral. His girlfriend was Piti Bodhipakti whose father (Prapone) was in the Thai Embassy. Prapone and his two daughters (Piti and Jiree (Nid)) stayed on in New Zealand. Jiree married Karl Bernhardt who was a fitter and turner in Red Band Breweries, and we remained in contact for the rest of our lives.

In my second year at university, I worked out what I needed to do to get good grades and after that I did not have any serious problems with study. Tawatchai worked hard as he knew he had to, with English as a foreign language, and I settled down to a steady work routine. I studied Geography, English, and Psychology. On the encouragement of Tony Black, I took up fencing. I enjoyed it, and it seemed the sort of thing you should do when you go to university. My problem was that Tony Black was left-handed, and as we often practised together in the basement at Weir, I became quite good at fighting left-handers. I was hopeless with right-handers, and most fencers were right-handed. My enthusiasm for fencing did not last beyond that year.

Saturday night in Weir House was pandemonium. People would come back from the pub and prepared to go out or to stay on and party.

14.3 Victoria University 1963

After the end of exams, on 26 November 1963, the weekly sensationalist newspaper *The Truth* published an article called "Women and Whoopee at Weir House." The main informant was the matron, Miss B. M. Williams (no relative of the warden Neville Williams, and clearly no friend of the warden). Like most sensationalist stories, there was enough truth in it to keep it plausible and plenty of half-truths and exaggeration to keep it juicy. The truth was that there was drunkenness and considerable untidiness, and occasionally women in the showers. As the editorial to the 1963 Weir Magazine mentioned before the *Truth* article was written, there had been a lack of maintenance over many years, and there were plans to demolish the recreation room.

Towards the end of 1963, I approached Ruapehu College about spending a month or two at the college getting teaching experience between the end of university exams and the end of the secondary school year. The Principal and Board of Governors kindly agreed, and I taught writing to a small group of third formers who were lagging behind the rest of the class, and English to some fifth formers getting ready for school certificate. It went well and did not dissuade me from wanting to be a teacher.

**My third year at university and flatting**

I had already made plans with Tony Black, Gavin Bayliss and Ian Harland to leave Weir House to go flatting in my third year (1964). Tony was studying law and working part-time at Bell Gully lawyers. Ian was studying science and Gavin commerce. I was studying English Stage 3, French and Italian reading knowledge (two reading knowledges were the equivalent of one paper), and a newly introduced course called Linguistics. These would allow me to complete my Bachelor of Arts. Our first flat was in Mertoun Terrace in Highbury, and we later moved to North Terrace at the top of the cable car. Another flat in North Terrace was home to Barry Crump, then beginning to become famous. Both Mertoun Terrace and North Terrace were within an easy walk to the university. In my third year, I had very memorable teachers, Don McKenzie and Roger Savage in English, Keith Buchanan in Geography, Tony Taylor in Psychology and Frank Brosnahan in Linguistics. The Linguistics course covered phonology, morphology and grammar (immediate constituent analysis) and provided a

thorough grounding in descriptive linguistics. In terms of my later career, it was the most useful course I did, followed by Psychology, particularly as it related to memory.

14.4 Tawatchai and the buffalo

At the end of my third year, I went to Thailand with Tawatchai and stayed in Bangkok with his family. We came through Hong Kong. Thailand was a revelation. My first time out of New Zealand. I had great trouble with the food and although I tried to eat most things, my staples were rice, fried meat and bananas. I struggled with anything containing fresh coriander, and chilli was well beyond me. I had reactions to insect bites, but I survived. I managed to learn a little bit of Thai to direct and bargain with taxis and I coped with getting around by myself. Tawatchai was very patient with me though I am sure I cramped his style.

14.5 Paul with Tawatchai's relatives in the village

We went to stay with Tawatchai's relatives in a country village. It was the season for threshing the grain. I was introduced to Thai rice wine, bought by the bucket. We sat in a group around the bucket and there was just one glass. So, having finished your drink you filled the glass for the next person. So, there was no lingering over the drink. I had bought a big bag of lollies for the children as well as some meat for the family. We had to travel by

boat to get there and stayed two or three nights. I took a lot of photographs as Peter Deadman in Ohakune wanted me to buy a Pentax camera for him. I bought it in Hong Kong and used it in Thailand. I took about seventy black and white photos, and it is interesting to look at them as things that drew my attention. About seven are of zoo animals at the Dusit zoo – a crocodile, an emu, a bear, turtles, a hippopotamus, some giraffes, and a tapir. It was probably my first time to go to a zoo, and I was impressed. About twenty are of life in the village, threshing the grain, riding a buffalo, a pet monkey, harrowing the rice field with a buffalo-drawn wooden harrow, the family in the village. There are several of the floating market and life on the Chaophya river, Tawatchai eating khanom tuay. Khanom tuay in later years became one of my favourite desserts, but at the time I was reluctant to try them. The photos of Bangkok streets in 1964 show a lot of public transport (buses, tuk-tuk and taxis) but few private cars. How things have changed!

14.6 Paul at the floating market

Tawatchai and I went to Chiengmai and through contacts of his brother Puchong, we stayed in a house in the hospital compound. At that time, Thailand was a keen participator in international beauty contests. Once again because of Puchong's contacts, we went around with the official responsible for finding candidates for the contest. One person we met was Apasara Hongsakula who became Miss Universe in the following year.

I was there about two months or more and by the time we left to return to New Zealand and university, I was coping much better.

**My fourth year at university and Weir House fellow**

After a successful third year, completing my BA, I applied to return to Weir House in 1965. The warden was now Tim Beaglehole. He had no qualifications which suggested he might not be a good warden, but he was an excellent warden. At the first meeting in the common room with all the residents, he said, there is only one rule at Weir, "Be reasonable". Unlike previous wardens, he ate with the residents and quickly got to know everyone's name. On Sunday afternoons, he would rush around one floor of the house knocking on each door and inviting the residents to come to his flat for a sherry before the evening meal. For reasons I can't recall, except perhaps that I was now a graduate, I was a Weir House fellow. Gary Hawke was deputy warden. Being a fellow involved generally supporting the warden and

keeping an eye on behaviour in the house. I think I got a rent reduction. I now had my own room on the third floor of the house. As a result of Tim's more personal approach, behaviour in Weir House greatly improved. My MA year was a bit disrupted by considering changing a course or two a couple of months into the year. My main problem was Middle English. Don McKenzie however helped me out by lending me his translation of Gawain and the Green Knight and I managed to settle down. In many ways, my fourth year at university was a very enriching year. As a part of my literary scholarship paper, I worked in the Wai-te-ata Press with Don McKenzie doing type-setting and using the old Stanhope press. I also went to several poetry weekends where poets such as Denis Glover, Louis Johnson, Peter Bland, James K. Baxter and Alistair Campbell read their poetry and talked about it. At most of these weekends, there were only about twenty or so attendees, mainly people from outside the university, and so there was a chance to get to know the poets well.

The MA classes for English were rather small and there were only two of us in the Advanced English Structure class (me and George Quinn), and three of us in the literary scholarship class. The English Structure class was focused on transformational grammar and Professor Brosnahan was barely a page or two ahead of us in the set text. I found preparation for the final exams for the literary papers fairly stressful, but I managed to do OK getting a B1 pass. George and I were told that there was a job going at the English Language Institute. George was not interested because he was heading for Indonesia, so I applied. I had a brief interview with H.V. George and got the job. A life-changing move.

**My fifth year at university – a member of staff**

I completed my MA in 1965, and in 1966 I became a junior lecturer at the university. I began in January and briefly flatted next to the university with Terry Waghorn, Ian Harland and Keith who was over-working as a computer programmer in the city. Before the university year began, I taught on a pre-university course run by Terry Waghorn's father for Pacific Island students about to begin university. Terry's father had retired as head of the teachers' college. I was probably not much help to him, as I knew nothing about language teaching and had about six weeks experience teaching at Ruapehu College several years before. When that course finished, I went back to Weir House as deputy warden. Tim Beaglehole was still the warden. I had a room with a fireplace on the right of the entrance to the old building. I think I had rent-free accommodation. My close friends at the time were Mike Gaffikin who got me interested in art, Lim Guangseng from Sarawak, Vijay Mishra (hooked on literature), Ross Jolly and Al Thompson.

The other junior lecturer was Pat McEldowney who had just completed her PhD supervised by Frank Brosnahan. We shared the basement of 14 Wai-te-Ata Road, just down from the newly completed Victoria University Library and struggled our way through training teachers of English although we knew nothing about it. Dr Arundel del Re also appeared there occasionally to gather material to teach a reading proficiency class. Dr del Re had taught me Italian reading knowledge. He had owned a bookshop in England and was a noted literary figure there in the Bloomsbury group. H.V. George employed him as a way of making sure Dr del Re had some income. HV saw him as someone somewhat like himself who had had drifted into various jobs in various places and who approached retirement with few financial assets. Ron Fountain, an experienced primary school teacher, was another member of staff, along with Helene Woolston who ran the language laboratory.

Pat and I attended most of H.V. George's lectures as a form of on-the-job training.

In 1966, Tim Beaglehole got a Harkness fellowship to go to the United States for a few months, and I was left in charge of Weir House. By now, the house was running smoothly and everyone was being reasonable. At the English Language Institute, I was rapidly learning a lot about teaching English as a foreign language. At the end of the academic year, I travelled to Hong Kong, Penang, Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia for a couple of months. On the flight to Hong Kong, I met a Chinese student (Peter Ng) returning home, and another student who was brought up in Hong Kong and spoke Chinese whose father was English and mother Portuguese. We agreed to meet for three meals, each one hosted by one of us.

I went to Sabah and in Kota Kinabalu I met up with people I had taught earlier in the year. I went to Sandakan and spent several days fruitlessly waiting to make contact with other students. From Sabah, I went to Kuching in Sarawak and met up with Lai Chaw Ho. His father was a goldsmith in Bau, and he made three gold rings for me that I used for my later travel in Indonesia. In Indonesia, the Nainggolan family in Jalan Teluk Betung in Djakarta invited me to stay with them, and I was introduced to Batak culture. The Bataks from Tapanuli around Lake Toba are staunchly Christian. They are also strongly tribal and in Jakarta I went with the Nainggolan family to several reunions. At the end of each day, the elders in the family used to sit on chairs in a circle and go over the happenings of the day expressing strong forthright emotion in their discussion. This was done in the Batak language, and I could not follow any of it. I soon realised however that there was no reason to feel alarmed at the level of emotion expressed. When, about six years later, we went to live in Indonesia for three years, Ibu Nainggolan and some of her children came to stay with us on a visit. By that time, Bapak Nainggolan had died, and the family were living off a pharmacy business that they set up in a part of their house.

14.7 The Nainggolan family

I travelled to Bandung, Jogjakarta and Salatiga, learning a lot of the Indonesian language on the way. As a result of my time in Thailand, I had learned how to travel light. I found that travelling increased my confidence in myself, and I was willing to go anywhere.

**My sixth year at the university**

1967 was my second year teaching at the English Language Institute and my sixth year at Victoria University. I went flatting with some ex-Weir residents (Boyd Anderson, Fraser Finlayson, and Miles Fairburn) in Hay Street in Oriental Bay. There were three bedrooms in the downstairs flat. Miles and I shared the best one (a harbour view and sun), while Boyd and Fraser each had their own bedroom.

Boyd was a very keen reader and loved jazz. He was studying Maths. Miles had had a year in Italy at the university for foreigners in Perugia. He was studying history. Fraser was working in a law office. We had a TV, and the popular shows were *The Avengers* and *The Wild, Wild West*. There was only one channel.

In that year I started going out with one of my students, something that is strongly forbidden today. Kanitha Roeksbutr was a teacher in Kasetsart University in Bangkok Thailand. She had received a Colombo Plan scholarship to study in New Zealand. Our first date was to a meal and a play at Downstage. Miles brought Maria. I think the play may have been *The Real Inspector Hound* by Tom Stoppard. It must have been incomprehensible to her. She, along with another Thai teacher, Sali, was boarding with the Thompson family in Severn Street in Island Bay. We met largely in the evenings to go to one of the numerous coffee shops in Wellington, a different one each time, to drink tea. It was a very chaste relationship. I eventually proposed at the Lotus restaurant in Cuba Street. At the end of the academic year, she would return to Thailand for a year, and I would go to Indonesia. We would get married at the end of 1968, when I would travel from Indonesia to Thailand. We made one brief visit to Ohakune (there and back on the same day) where Nitha was eagerly inspected by the family. She managed it well.

Earlier in that year I bought a second-hand sports car – a green MGA. It cost 600 pounds. The car went well. It was noisy, uncomfortable and too fast for my level of driving skill. Fortunately, I bought it while I could still feel the wind whipping through my hair as I drove with the top down. Sports cars are supposed to attract girls, but Nitha did not like it and rightly so.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs decided to give aid to a teachers' college in Indonesia. They wanted to start small, and as I wanted experience and wanted to start my ill-fated PhD, I applied and got the job. I suffered from ingrown toenails, and I thought to play it safe and avoid infection in Indonesia by having them operated on before going. The operation resulted in an infection on the big toe on my right foot and I spent five weeks in hospital, losing part of the side of my big toe. H.V. George covered for me at the ELI. Boyd Anderson happily took care of the sports car and my brown suit, from Hong Kong, which suited him better than it suited me. I think I eventually gave it to him.

14.8 Nitha with Dennis Blue in Napier – the sports car in the background

When the year ended, we left the flat. Nitha had returned to Thailand, and I stayed with Pat and Dennis McEldowney in their house at 32 Whaui Street in Vogeltown in Wellington. I taught for a few weeks on the ELI's English Proficiency Course. I then headed off to Jogjakarta.

## Chapter 15 Indonesia, Thailand and Marriage

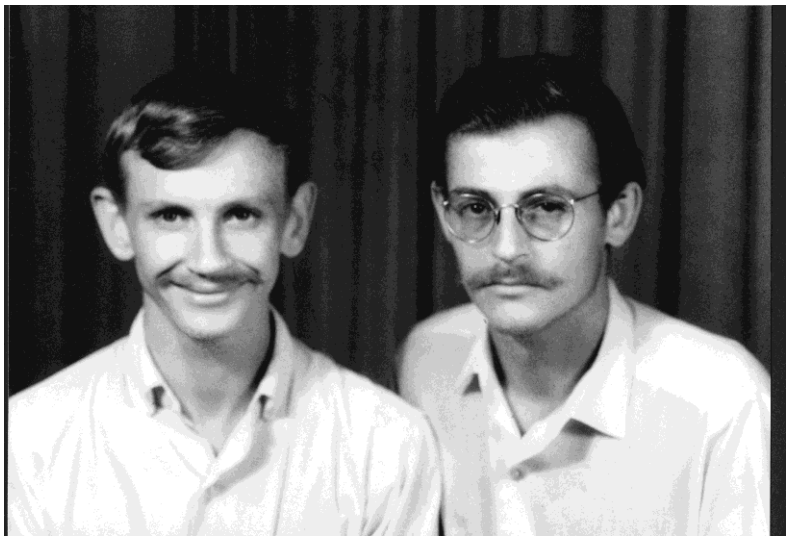
At the request of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, H.V. George had looked at some Indonesian teachers' colleges with a view to the Ministry setting up a Colombo Plan Aid project there. They wanted to start small, and I had plans of doing a PhD, having got a PhD scholarship which I had delayed taking up, and so I agreed to work for them part-time at the teachers' college while I worked on my PhD. H.V. thought that Jogjakarta would be a much better place to live than Jakarta and so his advice to the Ministry was to choose Jogja. It proved to be an excellent choice. So, in 1968 I went to work and do research in Jogjakarta.

I knew some Indonesian from my visit to Indonesia in 1966 and I had kept on working on it. When I arrived in Jogja, I searched for a place to stay and eventually stayed in a free-standing single room at the home of the head of the English Department, 'bu Moelono, in Jalan Magelang (*'bu* is the short form of *ibu* meaning "mother", which is commonly used to refer to older women). I had to provide my own meals and there was no toilet attached to the room, so I had to knock on the door to go to the backyard of the main house where the toilet was. As I ate in cheap restaurants, I had virtually continual diarrhoea. Fortunately, two Jesuit priests, Father Ernst Bolsius and Father van de Scheuren, invited me for a meal and I met Roger Long. Roger was a student at the University of Hawaii who was doing his PhD. He was living in three rooms on the other side of town and needed a room-mate to share expenses so he could get a servant to cook for him. I moved in with him. We found a servant, 'bu Parto, and the diarrhoea immediately disappeared. He was living in a Prince's compound. This sounds grander than it really was. Our neighbours were extremely poor and lived off the charity of others. Our water was carried from the well in the compound, and we had enough electricity to run about three light bulbs. I had brought a stereo set with me (I had forgotten the travelling light lesson), and if we turned it on, we had to turn off the light bulbs first, otherwise we would blow the fuse. We ate a mixture of Bulgur wheat and rice, partly because Bulgur wheat was cheap and partly for the nutrition. Bulgur wheat was given to Indonesia as aid, but the Indonesians did not have a high regard for it. "They feed it to animals in America, and they give it to us." Our left-over food went to the family next to us. We wondered what they thought of the Bulgur wheat, whether it was delicious for them. 'bu Parto's answer was, "For them, everything is delicious".

No-one around us spoke English, and I spent quite a lot of time reading Indonesian novels (Pramoedya Ananta Toer was my favourite writer), so my Indonesian quickly improved, although I can remember some occasions when I spoke like a book (diriku instead of saya sendiri).

Roger's research was on shadow puppet performance, wayang kulit. This meant that he had to record a large number of performances. Each performance lasted around nine hours, starting at about nine o'clock at night and ending at about six in the morning. This performance was carried out by one man, the dalang, accompanied by a gamelan orchestra. By a fortunate coincidence, Roger and I had bought the same brand of tape recorder (an Akai), and so he could use my battery to replace his when it ran out during the performance. We went along together to the performances, which were remarkable occasions and are some of my fondest memories of Indonesia. There was a dancing school in the compound where we lived, and in the morning, we would wake to the sound of gamelan music drifting in.

For reasons that are not clear to me, we both decided to grow a moustache. One evening, we went out for a meal, and Roger waited patiently for me to notice that he had shaved off his moustache. I never noticed.



15.1 Paul and Roger Long and moustaches

If anyone ever said that something was not suitable for us, because we were foreigners, we immediately went out and did it. This applied to small trivial things such as the type of soap we used, or a particular kind of food.

While teaching part-time at the department of literature and fine arts at the government teachers college in Jalan Senopati in Jogjakarta, I also taught two classes in year 1 at the junior secondary school just up the road, and a class on teaching methodology at the Catholic teachers college, Sanata Dharma. The teaching in junior high school was for data gathering for my PhD research. The teaching at Sanata Dharma was largely a favour for the Catholic priests. I had intended to observe a couple of classes at the junior high school, but the teacher I was to observe, ‘bu Sumeinah, had been diagnosed with cancer and so the school wanted me to take over the classes. The students were typical young teenagers, generally well behaved but with occasional bouts of mischief. I had no research questions for my thesis, no idea how to do research, and little idea of what to look for. The English coursebook I worked from was called the Salatiga course, and was a strongly oral-aural course with not very rich input. ‘bu Sumeinah was very keen on the course and was a teacher-trainer for others using the course. I don’t think the students gained much from my teaching. At the end of the year, I got a photographer to come and take a class photo of each class, and I gave a print to each student.

15.2 One of my classes at SMP2 Jogjakarta

As the photo shows, there were over fifty students in each class. The classrooms were large, but the large shuttered windows had to be kept open because of the heat. The blackboards were shiny and largely unusable. One of the teachers' college lecturers, 'pak Surono, concerned about my welfare, came and sat in on a class and also gave a demonstration of a vigorous application of the oral-aural method (*'pak* is the short form of *Bapak* meaning "father" and is used as a form of respect for males).

Sanata Dharma was a very strictly run organisation. When classes were on, there was no loitering in corridors. I taught the little I had picked up of language teaching in my two years at the English Language Institute in Wellington. The students had contact with another native-speaker (Roger Long also taught a class there).

On reflection, my year in Jogjakarta was a kind of preparation for the three years I was to spend there, beginning four years later. I learned Indonesian, I learned how to live in Indonesia, I became acquainted with the teachers' college staff and the teachers' college, I became familiar with the house where we were to live, and our servant, 'bu Parto, also worked as our servant when we returned to live there. After I left, the project continued and expanded with Ron Fountain and Gerry Meister replacing me. Four years later, I replaced Ron.

I got on well with the teachers' college staff and some were particularly kind to me. I was 24 years old and most of them were in their fifties, and I think they felt a kind of parental responsibility for me. Just before leaving, I held a couple of slametans in our place in the Prince's compound, one for the junior secondary school staff, and one for the teachers' college staff. A slametan is a kind of formal meal to mark some notable event, in this case, my departure. I still have a copy of the speech in Indonesian that 'bu Moelono gave. She was

a very interesting person. She was quite short and dressed very traditionally. The other teachers' college staff were basically afraid of her, because she could be very direct and would speak her mind. The Javanese way was to be indirect, and she was also a master of that. The teachers' college was going to move from Jalan Senopati to Karangmalang, and there would be houses available for some of the senior staff. 'bu Moelono was called to the rector's office and was told as she was among the most senior staff, she could have first choice of the houses. Her response to the rector was please choose for me. She explained to me later that if she chose, she could not choose the best house because that would appear greedy. However, if the rector chose the house for her, he had to give her the best or he would appear mean.

She came with me when I first arrived in Jogjakarta to get permission to observe in the junior high school. When she spoke with the government official involved, four languages were involved. She spoke high Javanese to the official to flatter him, because high Javanese was spoken to people superior to you. The official was of the same generation as her and did not want to speak down to her by using low Javanese, so he used Dutch which they both spoke. When they wanted me to understand, they spoke Indonesian and a little bit of English. Not a lot of English, as the official was not nearly as fluent as 'bu Moelono.

Roger and I got on well together. We both had bicycles and went everywhere on them. Roger was building up a collection of high quality wayang kulit, and we would cycle out to the villages where they were made to collect the ones that were finished and to order more. The outline of the flat leather puppet was cut out of leather by a skilled adult. Then children worked with fine chisels on cutting the detailed decoration and features of the puppet. The quality of the puppet depended on the skill of the adult in cutting the main shape, and on the care the children took in the detail of the decoration. Roger usually took a bag of lollies to encourage the children to work well.

I went to most of the wayang kulit performances that Roger recorded. The local radio station broadcast one Saturday night performance each month and this was very popular. The performance began around 9pm and people could pay to enter and watch. In the audience there would be university professors, illiterate labourers, every level of society. They all knew the stories that were being told, largely from the Hindu Mahabharata, and they knew all the characters involved. Particularly popular and moving was the Bharatayudha, the great war between the Pandawas and the Kaurawas.. At midnight, the doors of the hall in the alun-alun in the centre of Jogjakarta would be thrown open and the children waiting impatiently outside would be allowed in for free. It was like an invasion. We were up on the side of the stage recording, and you could see this flood of children popping up everywhere in the hall. At that time of night, the story involved the entrance of the servants/clowns, the punakawan (the fat and powerful Semar, Petruk with a limp and a long nose, little Gareng, and Bagong). This was the highlight of the performance for many.

I rarely lasted the whole nine hours, and as I cycled back home early in the morning, I would pass families sitting on mats in front of their houses, enjoying the cool night air with the radio on listening to the performance. The performances were remarkable works of art, and I have never seen any other country where art was so appreciated and a part of the daily life of all levels of society.

Roger had a teacher, ‘pak Hadi, who was a dalang (performer of wayang kulit), who was teaching him about wayang kulit. We were invited to his son’s circumcision which for the Javanese is a rite of passage to adulthood. Being the guests of honour, we were ushered in to observe the actual circumcision accompanied by a blow by blow account by the person performing the circumcision. Something I would rather have not witnessed.

I clearly remember the day when I went to one of the staff meetings of our faculty at the teachers’ college and found that now I could follow the whole meeting in Indonesian.

In 1968, Jogjakarta was a city of bicycles, and every morning and afternoon the main streets were packed with people going to and from work and school. The early afternoon was a time for the afternoon sleep, and between 1pm and 4pm the streets were deserted.

Around November 1968, I finished my teaching at the teachers college and junior high school, and I left Indonesia to fly to Singapore and then travel by train to Bangkok to get married.

## Chapter 16 Married life and parenthood

When I arrived in Bangkok in November 1968 after two days and two nights of train travel, Nitha was waiting at Hualampong station. We went to her aunt's place, where I was to stay. Her aunt, Na Porn, had been an actress and was separated from her husband. She had a daughter, Oo, at secondary school, and Na Porn's brother, Na Juab, and his wife and daughter lived next door. Nitha had bought a second-hand Volkswagen, although she could not drive. Her brothers Pa and Ti could drive but had to light a cigarette before getting in to drive. They had demolished several large water jars during their driving lessons.

The family lived in a side street just behind a post office in Phaholyotin Road, Bangkhen in Bangkok. The house was old but was on about a quarter-acre of land with its own canal where Nitha's father had his evening wash.

We got ready for our wedding, preparing and delivering invitations. The wedding was held on 19 December 1968, not too far from the Democracy monument in the national lottery hall. I hoped it wasn't an omen. The photographer at the wedding was Bamrung Tanchittiwatana, who would later become my brother-in-law when he married Maew, Nitha's sister. It was a traditional wedding ceremony. We had registered our marriage two days before on 17 December 1968, and forever after we were rather confused about when we were actually married. Was it the day of the ceremony or the day of the registration or the average of the two?

16.1 Our marriage ceremony in Bangkok

While Nitha finished off her teaching at Kasetsart University, I spent time in the Kasetsart library, under the supervision of her librarian friend Pi Yi (Daruna Somboonkom), reading.

There was no honeymoon. Pat McEldowney, who had been my colleague in Wellington, and her husband were travelling to the UK. They called in in Thailand to see us on the way there. We rented their house at 32 Whaui Street. This was to become an ELI house because when we left it three years later, Jane Dudley, the ELI secretary took it over and eventually bought it.

When we got back to New Zealand, we went to Ohakune, and had a wedding celebration there in the Dixon's old house (where the car yard is now) and the photos taken then are a remarkable snapshot of Ohakune residents at that time.

16.2 The Nation family at our wedding celebration in Ohakune in 1969

I worked on writing my PhD with a little income from my PhD scholarship, while Nitha got a job on the watch counter at James Smith's in Wellington. In 1969, Nitha taught Thai classes at Wellington Polytechnic. She was teaching New Zealand soldiers who were going to work on a road building project in north-east Thailand. The money from the teaching allowed us to buy a piece of land in Warwick Street to begin getting a house built. Khun Tawiphun was at the Thai Embassy then and we often met with the Thai Dip TESL students, including Sangsaree, Rasee, Wanee, Tiamchand, Rasamee (who eventually married Weerawat from Massey). I am sure that the frequent contact with the Thais made living in New Zealand much easier for Nitha.

16.3 Thai friends in Wellington in 1969

In 1969, I showed what I had written of my PhD to John Pride, a newly arrived professor of Linguistics, and he correctly made it clear that it was not up to PhD standard. Fortunately, I was rehired by the ELI and started work back there.

In 1971, Nitha got a job at Phoenix Insurance on Featherston Street. She also taught a night course on Thai for the general public at Wellington Polytechnic.

16.4 At the Phoenix Insurance Company ball

Wade Mansell, one of my friends from Weir House days, convinced me that I should not be renting and should buy a house. He had a house designed by Roger Walker in Highbury and he encouraged me to use Roger as well. I searched around for a piece of land, looking largely at flat sections, but Roger told me to consider a sloping section in Warwick Street. Following his recommendation, we bought it. He drew up the plans and building started with the street level garage. We had mortgages from the Bank of New Zealand and State Advances.

Ron Fountain had now been in Jogjakarta at the teachers' college for three years and wanted to return to the ELI in Wellington. I applied to replace him and was successful.

So, near the end of 1971, we went to Thailand via Bali. While in Bali, we looked up Janice and Djati Mantjika. Janice was from Palmerston North and had married Djati, a Balinese who was studying at Massey in Palmerston North. My brother Peter knew Janice. They were running a travel agency, Jan's Tours, in Den Pasar. We went on a day tour around Bali. Nitha did not feel so well, so we returned to the hotel. The driver told Jan that Nitha was pregnant. We laughed at that, but when we got to Thailand and Nitha went to the doctor, it turned out to be true. After a month or so in Thailand, we went to Jogjakarta to replace Ron and Trisha Fountain, and moved into 17 Jalan Magelang, with 'bu Parto as our servant.

Gerry and Jenny Meister had been in Jogjakarta for two years and were living in a house near the kraton (the Javanese Sultan's palace). They would eventually have to move because foreigners were not supposed to live in the kraton precincts. When I was chosen to replace Ron Fountain, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were a bit concerned because they could not work out who would be the team leader. I told them that that was not an issue for Gerry and me. We had bought a car in Singapore that would be shipped duty free to Indonesia. A Peugeot 504. When we arrived in Jakarta, it was waiting for us with the boot loaded with duplicating paper for our Gestetner machines. We drove to Bandung, and stayed the night with a New Zealand family there, and the next day travelled to Jogjakarta. We managed to rouse 'bu Parto's aged husband who was guarding the house and moved in.

16.5 Nitha and Paul at 17 Jalan Magelang

The railway line to Magelang ran past the front of our house, about a metre from the gate. An ancient wood-fired train would run past about three times a week – the cowboy train. Also in front of the house was a tyre repair business consisting of a compressor, a radio, and a flimsy lean-to. It was run by an aging man and his son, Mas Panut. The business did not have a pressure gauge and working out the pressure of a tyre involved tapping it with a steel bar. When Gerry got his tyres pumped up there, he later checked them with a gauge and found they were all over the place by a very large amount. Every so often a tyre would explode.

16.6 The front gate on Jalan Magelang and railway, Mount Merapi in background

When we moved into the house, we had the fence lined with split bamboo so that there was a small degree of privacy. A particularly tough variety of grass was planted to give Prahm somewhere to play outside.

16.7 George Quinn, Dick Beetham and Emmy Quinn in Jogja 1973

George Quinn had been living in Salatiga and teaching at Satya Wacana Kristen University. I had visited him there in 1968 when I first lived in Jogja. He moved to Jogja to study at Gadya Mada University and eventually married Emmy. Emmy had been an ELI student in New Zealand before I joined the ELI. We went to a series of lectures by Professor Verhaar in Indonesian on descriptive grammar. Emmy and I collaborated on a speed reading course published by Oxford in Kuala Lumpur. While we were in Jogja, Jack Richards decided he needed overseas teaching experience and taught at Satya Wacana in Salatiga. He was a regular visitor, usually on his way to and from Singapore. We had visits from John Nicholson, the Oxford University Press representative from Kuala Lumpur, and he went to Salatiga to see Jack and came back enthused by the publishing possibilities that Jack had suggested (English through Pictures). Jack was very keen on Singapore and soon ended up teaching at

RELC. While at Salatiga, he got his students to perform an adapted version of *Charley's Aunt* and brought it to Jogja for a very successful performance at the IKIP. He published the script as a graded reader.

I had been reading Bright and McGregor's (1970) book *Teaching English as a Second Language* and was determined to set up an extensive reading program. Gerry and I thoroughly searched the faculty library (the faculty was still in Jalan Senopati) and found a surprising number of graded readers, largely from previous aid projects. We managed to buy some more, and we were in business. The introduction of extensive reading was one of the most useful things we did. Because the learners could not afford dictionaries, we made a very primitive duplicated bilingual dictionary. We printed off lots of copies and gave them to the librarians to sell to the students for a very nominal amount. The librarians could keep the money. They were thus enthusiastic supporters of the extensive reading program, and at break times there was a deluge of students wanting to borrow the graded readers that had previously been locked in glass-fronted book cabinets. The more able of our students were soon reading unsimplified texts and were borrowing our paperback novels, some of which I felt a bit worried about lending in a strongly Muslim country, though religious attitudes were more relaxed then

I taught the third year teachers' college students and Gerry taught the second years. I also taught a class of English for the non-English majors, largely art students. Gerry worked on developing a course in pedagogical grammar.

Dick Beetham was also working in Jogja on an engineering project and babysat our house for us when we went to Thailand.

Under Father Bolsius' urging, we helped set up a regular seminar, about every two or three months, involving teaching staff from IKIPs Solo, Salatiga and Semarang, as well as IKIP Jogjakarta and Sanata Dharma, and possibly Gadjah Mada University. The first seminar was held at Sanata Dharma around the topic of English for non-English majors. The seminar was very useful and pushed me to look at aspects of ELT I had not considered before. Over time, it became a little more elaborate as the venue moved from one IKIP to another and each one wanted to outdo the other with ceremonials.

The IKIP students were a very interesting group. Many of them were very bright students who could not afford university fees, but who could afford to go to the teachers' college. If it rained near the beginning of class, some students did not turn up as they had only one good set of clothes and could not get them wet. We saw great improvement in these students over the three years they were at the training college. When I returned to Jogjakarta many years later, I was pleasantly surprised to see how many of the English Department staff were students that we had taught. They included Kusman, Bambang Prijono, Suwarsih Madya.

While I was there, the arts faculty moved from Jalan Senopati to new buildings in Karangmalang, not far from Sanata Dhamma. The English department staff included 'bu Moelono, 'pak Harun, 'pak Sukardi, 'pak Surono, 'pak Soesinto, 'pak Ferry Adnan, 'pak Faesol Muslim. The small Javanese Department included 'pak Mukidi, and the Indonesian Department included 'bu Hastuti, 'bu Pintum, 'pak Sanoesi.

In the training college, I taught 14-20 hours a week. I worked on writing course materials for third-year students. Ron Fountain had worked on first-year materials and Gerry Meister was

working on second-year materials. The book on teaching techniques was one result of this. We tried to have an effect on the other teaching staff by teaching and preparing material for a course and then moving out and letting other staff take over the material.

The conditions in Indonesia were potentially frustrating. The organization of the training college was rather haphazard and living conditions had their ups and downs. But having worked for four years in Indonesia and having thoroughly enjoyed it, I had no difficulty in working anywhere.

The first three articles I ever wrote were for in-house publications of the IKIP. They were short and very practical.

‘bu Parto asked if a young girl, the daughter of a friend, could come and work for us. Sutinah was about 11or 12 years old and had previously worked in the market helping her mother selling meat. We fed her well and I taught her to read Javanese. She had had some small knowledge of reading, but with a little regular instruction, she was soon reading the newspaper to ‘bu Parto who could not read. She quickly grew.

Prahm was born in Jogjakarta, at Rumah Sakit Bethesda on Jalan Solo. Nitha went into labour late at night on Thursday 22 June 1972 (Kamis Paing in the Javanese calendar), but he was not born until fifteen or more hours later, close to 7pm the same day. He was delivered by a Dutch doctor, Doctor Bouma. The hospital care was not that great as the nurses’ idea of hygiene was very lax. It was a while before Nitha could breastfeed him, but he survived, although with some stomach trouble.

16.8 ‘bu Artmo, ‘bu Parto. Prahm, Sutinah in 1972

He was very active. This may have been an effect of the strong Javanese coffee that Nitha drank. He slept well at night, but during the day had only two brief sleeps of twenty minutes or so each time.

When Prahm was born, ‘bu Parto said we needed someone to do the washing, so we ended up with another servant, ‘bu Artmo. She worked part-time and went back to her own place each afternoon when the washing was finished.

16.9 Jack Richards carrying Prahm the Javanese way

When Prahm began moving around, against everyone’s advice (it will stop him learning to walk), we bought him a kind of walker with wheels that allowed him sit on a seat and scoot around inside the house. The house was all one level with tiled floors, and he quickly became highly skilled at zipping from one place to another, and putting a foot down to do a spin to change direction. It turned out to be a good idea as it gave him great mobility long before he could walk.

One day, when I was having a meeting with some IKIP staff in the living room, Nitha was aware that the meeting had finished so she let Prahm scoot into the room in his walker. The double doors burst open, and he headed straight for the ping-pong table looking ready to decapitate himself. However, he knew he had a centimetre or two of clearance underneath and did not hesitate. Fortunately, none of the aging IKIP staff had a heart attack, but they were close to it. He weed on the leather straps holding the seat so many times that they snapped, and we had to replace them twice.

16.10 Nitha with Prahm in his walker

We also bought him blow-up water wings, one on each arm, that he used in the swimming pool where we went each Friday. Once again, against advice. It turned out to be another great idea, and he was soon swimming with no fear of the water.

At one point he caught measles, and on reflection he probably came near dying, though we had no thought of that at the time. He had a high fever and no energy, which was unlike him. He was so hot, that we could hardly bear to touch him. After a week or so, he recovered, and he was back to his highly active self.

16.11 Nitha, Prahm, Mu in Thailand in 1973

Whenever we got some repairs done on the house in Jalan Magelang, the workers who went up into the roof, came down saying work was needed on the framing. Eventually, ‘bu Moelono decided it needed to be done, so we rented a house in Kaliurang, a holiday retreat on the side of a volcano Mount Merapi. It was a bit chilly but a pleasant change from the heat in Jogjakarta. It was there, at ten months old, that Prahm learned to walk, and Roger Long and his wife Lois were staying with us at the time and Roger filmed his first steps. While they were there, we went to see the dance performance of the Ramayana at Prambunan Temple.

16.12 Nitha, Paul, Gerry Meister and Jenny Meister in Kaliurang

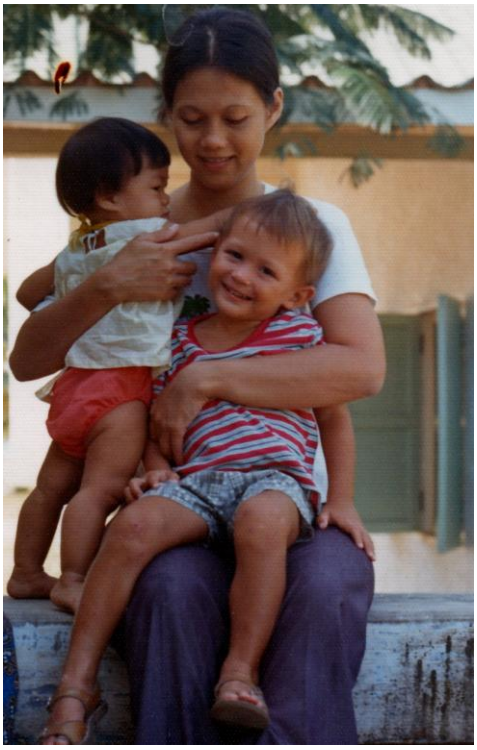
When we returned to the city, Allan and Tracy visited us for a couple of months. They were both teenagers. They learned to eat Indonesian food and eventually tolerated the mosquitos. On the way to and from Jogja, they came through Bali, and I drove there to collect them and send them home. Each time we stayed about a week at Kuta Beach. Kuta was then quite deserted and a great place to stay. The rooms were very basic. The restaurant was super slow, but they made good pancakes. Topless granny prepared the vegetables for the various dishes and generally kept an eye on things. Sunset on Kuta beach was something to see and people used to wander down there just to watch.

When Prahm began to talk, he used English and Indonesian. When we left Indonesia, we stayed one night in a hotel in Jakarta. We ordered Western food, but when the meal arrived. A little finger was raised, and the waiter was asked, in Indonesian, for rice, “Minta nasi, Mas.”

In our last year or so in Jogja, we met up with Ian Thomas who was in Indonesia from England as a volunteer. Ian was a very enthusiastic teacher who was very keen on communication activities as a way of learning English. I first met him at a party we had at our house. He had a bit too much to drink and went to sleep in the toilet. When a desperate queue started to form, we managed to open the door and transfer him to a bed. Gerry and I recommended him for a job at the English Language Institute in Wellington and he fell in love with New Zealand. Eventually he returned to England to do an applied linguistics degree, and then worked for the British Council in various places, returning to live in New Zealand. I learned a lot about communication activities from him.

16.13 Niha and Prahm in Jogja

We had spent three years in Jogjakarta. We went back to New Zealand via Thailand where Prahm met his first Thai cousin, Miau.



16.14 Miau, Maew, Prahm 1974

16.15 Prahm and Miau

We returned to our newly completed house in Wellington. The house, which should have taken four months or so to complete, took three years because of a dispute between the carpenter and block-layer. Eventually it was finished, and Kevin Hyde, our neighbour (also in

a Roger Walker house), and Dick Beetham varnished the living room floor just before we returned. Instead of costing $15,000 it ended up costing $30,000, but at least it was finished.

## Chapter 17 New Zealand and Thailand

In 1975, the ELI was still in Wai-te-ata Road, and my office was what had been the front porch. We bought a Sunbeam Imp, largely because it was cheap ($1500) and you could load things in the back as in a hatchback.

There was a lot of work to do on our land as it had no paths, no steps, no retaining walls, no flat areas and no garden. The next three years were spent making walls and steps and paths. I turned our packing case from Indonesia into a shed. Looking back, I am not sure where I got the energy from. I made the substantial crib wall for our bottom lawn, the V-block and other block wall for the top lawn, along with the steps to the compost bin, as well as assembling the compost bins. At the same time, I was teaching various courses and writing articles. I also completed a Bachelor of Educational Studies. As the assignment for one of the courses, surveyed every article I could find on teaching and learning vocabulary. I expected to find about twenty or thirty, but I ended up with several hundred. I did exhaustive searches of the major journals such as the *Modern Language Journal, ELT Journal, TESOL Quarterly, Language Learning, SSLA,* and *English Teaching Forum*. The resulting bibliography became the basis for *Teaching and Learning Vocabulary* which eventually was published in 1990.

17.1 ELI staff – H.V. George, Paul, Helen Barnard, Ron Fountain, Thoron Hollard, Ian Thomas in 1976

Prahm went to the Play Centre in Wilton around the corner from us run by Lou Zena. Through the Play Centre, we met a lot of other parents, and Prahm had friends to play with who would go to the same school.

17.2 Prahm in the snow in Wellington in 1976

One day, while Nitha was in the kitchen and I was in the living room, there was an explosion and a spare tyre rolled into the living room. The kids up the road had been playing with it, and it hurtled down the road, hit the side of our garage and came down the bank through the large round kitchen window. There was glass everywhere. A piece had even taken a chip out of the ceramic on our cooking hob. Fortunately, Nitha was not hurt, but the next day I started building a fence along from the garage.

17.3 Nitha and Prahm by our newly built fence

At the end of 1977, we were off overseas again, this time on a two year contract to Thailand, where I was to teach in the language school at the Department of Technical and Economic Co-operation (DTEC) in Bangkok, again in the employ of the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs. For the first month or more, we lived with the family in Soi Chalermsook, while we looked for a house to rent. I had a list of preferences starting with a house with a swimming pool, an apartment with a swimming pool, a house without a swimming pool …

We ended up with a house (a mansion) next to a block of flats owned by the same people, and the flats had a swimming pool we could use.

The DTEC was the Thai government department that handled foreign aid. Many Thais applying for scholarships to study overseas were unable to pass the required English tests like the TOEFL test, the British Council test, and the Australian test. The Language Institute of the DTEC ran courses for Thai civil servants to prepare them for the tests and for study overseas. Partly as a result of the selection procedures and partly as a result of the teaching, the Institute managed to quadruple the number of Thais taking up scholarships.

Half of the staff were foreign experts from Great Britain (Peter Hargreaves, David Clarke, Bob Wilde), Australia (Kerry O'Sullivan, Margaret Hitchcock) and New Zealand, and volunteers from the USA (Paul Paquette) and Canada (Greg McConnell). The rest of the staff were Thai (Premchitr, Galayanee, Kingaw, Kwanjai, Suda), a few of whom who had been to the ELI in Wellington. I taught around 14 hours a week, wrote material and organized a syllabus. The syllabus was aimed mainly at encouraging Thai staff to teach parts of the course that they were usually reluctant to teach. It had moderate success. During the two-week breaks between terms, I gave talks and taught at courses usually run by Thais who had been to the ELI. We went to Yala to teach one such course run by Chat Bunya.

Although we bought a second hand car, a rusty Oldsmobile, I travelled to work by bus (Route 44). I carried just a few baht with me and had no credit cards. I had enough money for bus fare there and back, morning tea (a Thai dessert), lunch (often fried noodles) and a Thai dessert), and afternoon tea (a Thai dessert). I never had any fear of getting my pocket picked as there was little to pick. The food court at the DTEC was fairly basic, but the food was good. Nitha was a bit concerned that I was a foreign expert but had no money in my pocket.

The house we lived in had been owned by Prapart, a somewhat notorious member of a previous government. Our house was 110 Pradiphat Road. The houses next to it down the short soi that separated us from Rewedee School were 110/1, 110/2 and so on. The Thai mint, handling all of Thailand's money, was 110/5! When we moved into the house, Nitha's brother, Pa, and his wife Gung, came with us. Na Porn, Nitha's aunt, was our cook and also lived there. We also had a servant Yupaa who cleaned and did the washing. When Nitha's mother was ill, she also came and stayed with us.

17.4 Prahm getting a much appreciated basket of fruit from his grandfather for his birthday

It was an ideal living situation in that we had an extended family and whenever we wanted to go out, there was always someone to look after Prahm. Prahm had his own bedroom. This was seen as being rather cruel. How could a young child sleep alone? Each night he was smuggled out of his bedroom to Pa and Gung's room. I realized I was wasting my time using New Zealand child-rearing practices. I was well out-numbered, so I gave up and all went smoothly.

Prahm had had five months of school in New Zealand and could read. He went to Rewadee School which was next door to us. He spoke no Thai at that point, and before his first day we taught him how to say "I want to go to the toilet". Within a month he was well on his way to being fluent. We had enrolled him in the New Zealand Correspondence School, but did not persist with the lessons when it became clear he was doing well at school in Thailand.

17.5 Prahm ready to head next door to school

One day he came home from school and proudly announced he was third in the class in English. Third, I said. You're the only native-speaker in the whole school. How can you be only third? He explained that they had multiple-choice. One of the questions was: What is the third letter of the alphabet? (a) c, (b) d, (c) b, (d) a. He knew it was c so he made the third choice, (c). You don't do multiple-choice like that, I said, and I showed him how to do it. After that, he was first in English, and 25$^{th}$ out of 26 in Thai dancing. His score for Thai dancing was not helped by his pants splitting in half during the public performance.

17.6 Prahm (right, looking away) and Khun Khru Fongsawad (with white headband)

During the dry season, he was covered in dust from head to toe and had to be hosed down when he came home.

Soon after arriving, we bought Prahm a small bike, and on the large front lawn, he quickly learned to ride. Wellington was far too dangerous for bike riding for someone as fearless as him.

17.7 The nuclear family

I bought a copy of Harry Rolnick's book *Eating out in Bangkok*, and once every week or two we would visit a recommended restaurant. Nitha was not as enthusiastic as me, because the restaurants reviewed served western food rather than Thai food. Our favourites included Black Forest cake at Neil's Tavern, and pork and bread dumplings at Wienerwald.

The New Zealand Embassy had a bungalow at Pattaya, and we were entitled to use it once every few weeks on a roster system. It had a great view of the sea, was quiet and we made good use of it. When we first arrived with the whole family, the local woman, Dang, who

took care of it, was a bit surprised as it was usually used by three or four people at the most. There was at least a dozen of us. Where's the farang, she asked.

17.8 Paul at the Pattaya bungalow

Having avoided learning how to swim for so many years, I finally taught myself. I had been happy enough in the water, but could only swim as far as I could hold my breath. Over about a month, in the swimming pool next door, I taught myself how to do the crawl and take regular breaths. Greg McConnell and David Clarke at DTEC had taken up scuba diving, so on their advice I took a NAUI course taught by Arthur (Dusty) Rhodes at JUSMAG on Sathorn Road. The club involved was called the Ocean Rovers Scuba Club and was made up of expatriates, mainly American. My first lesson in a swimming pool with scuba gear had me hooked. Being able to just hang there in the water with perfect control was fantastic. Once we dived on coral off Pattaya, I was further hooked. You could get amongst a school of fish and just stay with them. On my first sea dive, I got separated from my buddy, and I got bawled out by an instructor (I think it was Dave Doll who was helping Dusty). It was a valuable lesson I never forgot. George Keenan, who was vice-president of Chase Manhattan Bank in Bangkok, became my regular diving buddy. He learned his lesson on keeping close to your buddy in a more dramatic fashion on a dive when I was not there. The divers had gone down the anchor line and were looking around. George wandered off on his own and then someone saw him zip past heading for the anchor rope. He had run out of air. He realized he was not going to make it up, so he dashed back to one of the divers and they started buddy breathing. When he got on to the boat, he was retching and shaking. From that day he became the most reliable buddy you could have, never more than a foot or two away. After we completed the beginners' course, which took several weeks of night classes and weekend dives, we did the advanced course. We also gradually bought our own equipment including extra regulators for buddy breathing.

When we finished the advanced course, we used to go off about once a month with Jerry (Doc) Welch going on Heng's boat from Samesarn near Sattahip. Doc was a qualified vet and had been in Vietnam. Because the beginning of his veterinary degree was much the same as a medical doctor's qualification, during the Vietnam war he had to do health inspections of mess halls and kitchens. When the war ended, he decided he was not going back to the United States and stayed on in Thailand. He had a big set of dive tanks and his own compressor, and he lined Khun Heng's small fishing boat with the rubber underlay that lined B57 bombers. We used to go near Koh Chang (how many Koh Changs (elephant islands) are there in Thailand?) off Samesarn (squid city) and dive on the wreck of a Japanese second

world war ship at about 90 feet, and then go and do a shallow coral dive by Koh Chang. Occasionally, when the current was right, Heng would drop us off at the beginning of a channel and the current would zip us through the water at a great speed. What a sensation! Heng would then pick us up, and drop us off to do it again.

17.9 Paul heading for the deep

17.10 Jerry (Doc) Welch

Doc was very knowledgeable, and we learned a lot from diving with him. He actually couldn't swim, but with the buoyancy jackets and tanks, you did not need to. Sometimes we would dive off Pattaya, usually accompanied by Sarot who knew where the old Chinese wrecks were. George Keenan and I did a couple of night dives off Samesarn which was a new experience. When you came up from the dive and saw all the squid boats around with their lights to attract squid, it felt a bit like being chased by searchlights in a war.

17.11 George Keenan (lying down) and Paul

One of the memorable dives occurred when I wasn't there. The divers had gone down and found a large clay jar, like the ones used to store rainwater for drinking. They decided to

bring it up, so they looped a rope around the neck of the jar, tipped it over to get rid of the sand in it, and then started to fill it with air from their regulators. As the jar rose, the air in it expanded, and it got away from the divers and slammed into the bottom of the boat. Those on the boat thought the end of the world had arrived, but fortunately it did not put a hole in the boat. Those down below then saw these large heavy pieces of clay jar hurtling down towards them and had to scatter out of the way.

While in Thailand, we were visited by Gaye and Steve, Allan and Terrill, Peter, Pat, Vicki and Kris, H.V. George, Jenny and Yu-Lina, Jenny Meister and Anna. Peter got to see tropical fish in their natural habitat near Samesarn. Vicki put a python around her neck at the zoo.

17.12 Ba, Steve, Gung, Gaye at Pradiphat

Nitha's mother became ill while we were in Thailand, and she came and stayed with us for a few months until she recovered. During that time, Pa made a promise at the Spirit House in the compound, that if she got better, he would put on an entertainment for the spirits. She recovered and so we were treated to a day of entertainment.

17.13 The play for the spirits

17.14 Vicki, Pat, Kris, Nitha, Paul, Peter

Living with us made a very big difference to Na Porn and to us. Before coming to Pradiphat Road, the boundaries of Na Porn's life had narrowed, and she was nervous about going out. With more people around her and with her new responsibilities, she regained her old confidence. She became Prahm's second grandmother, and they were both very fond of each other.

17.15 Na Porn and Prahm

Pa and Gung started the building of their own house while with us, and when we left, they were able to move there.

When the end of my two years in Bangkok approached, I contacted the university in New Zealand to see if I could stay another year. Their reply was, “You have been employed by the university for ten years. You have spent five of these away from the university. We think you should come back,” Fair enough. So, in early 1980, we returned to New Zealand.

By now Prahm was fluent in Thai, and through correspondence lessons and regular reading had easily kept up with reading in English.

In 1982, H.V. George retired as head of the ELI, and Graeme Kennedy took over as professor and head of school.

We now spent five years in New Zealand. Prahm went back to Wilton School (later to be called Otari School) and met up with his old friends, Gregory O’Regan, Fraser Anderson, Anthony McCluskey, Thor Latham, Grant Heather. We bought the section next to ours (37 Warwick Street). It had gone through several owners who for various reasons could not build there. I contacted the lawyer involved and told him that I knew the problems with fill on the section and offered to buy it. When the road had been put through, joining both ends of Warwick Street, they just bulldozed the dirt over on to the sections. This caused problems with putting down foundations for a house. Roger Walker however said it would not be a problem.

After buying the land I faced the problem of keeping it clear of gorse and blackberry, and soon decided that the most effective way of managing it would be to build on it. Roger Walker designed the house, I borrowed money at a very high interest rate and two builders, Steve and Warren started building.

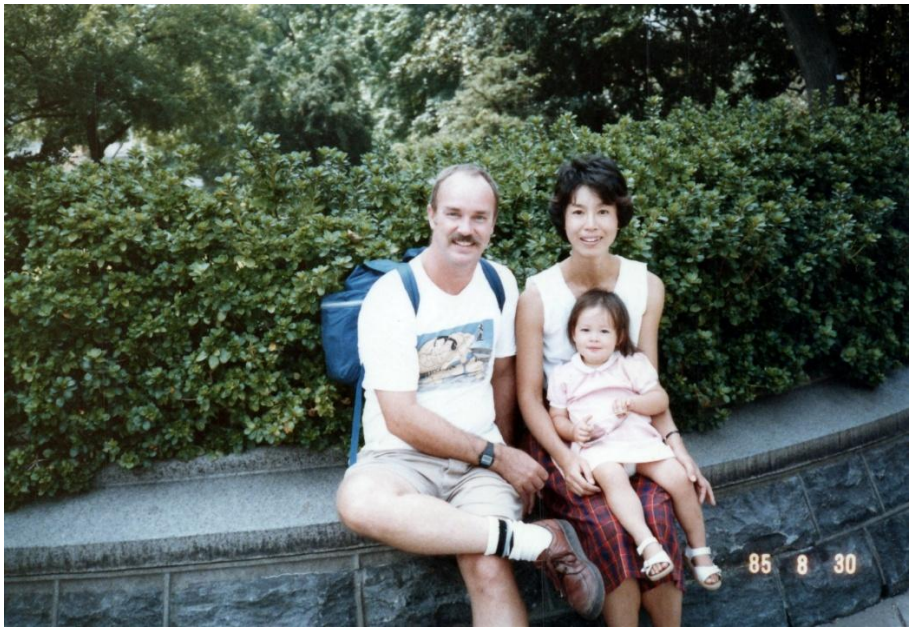
I got a phone call from Jim Coady in Ohio asking if I was interested in coming to teach there for a few months on a Fulbright scholar-in-residence award at Ohio University. Jack Richards had recommended me to him. I said yes, and in 1985 we flew to the United States, via Disneyland in Los Angeles. After a couple of days there we flew to Columbus, Ohio where Jim Coady was waiting to meet us to drive us for two hours to Athens, Ohio. We lived in married students’ quarters (Mill Street Apartments) in a two-bedroom apartment within a very easy walk to the university.


17.16 Nitha outside the Mill Street apartment

Prahm was twelve years old and went to East Elementary School, at first by bus and then by his new bicycle. We bought an old Pontiac Catalina for US$700. There is a similar one in Southward's car museum on the Kapiti Coast near Wellington, one year younger than ours.

17.17 Prahm in the Pontiac

Our near neighbours, Kelly Frankin and his wife Kumiko, were my students and they had a young daughter Milly. We soon got to know others in the apartments.




17.18 Kelly, Kumiko and Milly Franklin

One of my students, Jeff Magoto, organized a Sunday morning softball game for those in my classes and any others interested. I was hopeless at it, but the gracious encouragement of my students made me feel I had some hidden talent for it. That talent still remains hidden. Towards the end of the game, Nitha would appear carrying a chilly bin with a watermelon in it.

17.19 Nitha Prahm and Paul in Ohio

We were very short of money because of the expensive mortgage on 37 Warwick Street, but Jim Coady had arranged extra summer teaching for me and that saw us through. Johnny and Audrey visited for a couple of weeks while we were there.

17.20 The Coadys and Nations at Old Man's Cave in Ohio

Chuck Sturms and I went off to TESOL in New York. While we were queuing to register, Andrew Cohen turned up. He did not have a room reserved, so we had an extra bed put in our room and he stayed with us. Each evening Chuck and I would walk the streets of Manhattan. We went looking for Times Square and walked straight through it without realizing. We went to Grand Central Station, Greenwich Village, Central Park, the twin towers, the Catholic cathedral, and the Rockefeller Centre. On Graeme Kennedy's recommendation, I visited the Frick art gallery and the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Bruegel's hayfield).

We went with a group of my students and Marmo (one of the Linguistics staff) to the Ohio State Fair and were entertained by Arlo Guthrie and Pete Seeger.

17.21 Prahm and Jeff Magoto at the Ohio State Fair

During a university break, we drove to Rowley, Massachusetts to see Rupert Ingram who was interested in publishing my book *Teaching and Learning Vocabulary*. On the way, we stayed with Jim Coady's sisters in Scranton, and Roger Long in Washington, D.C.

I was invited to the Summer Institute for South-East Asian Languages in Ann Arbor, Michigan to review their language programs. They got cold feet about that and decided that I should just give a talk. We drove there in the Pontiac. In Ann Arbor, I was impressed with the way the town and the university were mixed up with each other, with shops next to university buildings and parks.

I sat in on several of the classes teaching Indonesian (taught by Gloria Soepomo whose husband I knew from Sanata Dharma in Jogjakarta), Burmese, Khmer, and I think Thai. I was very impressed with the teaching. Each language was taught in a very different way. Indonesian through the Oral-Aural approach, Burmese through individual study and discussion, Khmer through the use of a teacher and a native-speaker assistant. Each course was very well taught. Now that I know more about curriculum design, I would be more critical of the range of opportunities for learning involved for each language, but I would quite happily have followed any of the courses provided. We included Niagara Falls on our journey. We had got tired of fast food and eventually found a Chinese restaurant. There were very few customers. Prahm ordered wonton soup. When he finished the first bowl he asked, “Can I have another?” I said yes. Eventually, he finished seven bowls. The food was good, so we went back the next night. As we walked in the restaurant, the waiter looked up. When he saw us, his smile was the largest I have ever seen on a waiter. Prahm only managed five bowls that night.

The only time that the Pontiac let us down was on a weekend when we decided to drive to Zanesville. The steering block started losing fluid and it became impossible to steer the car. We were in the countryside, but a forestry worker had parked his ute near where we stopped, and he happened to have a bottle of fluid we could use for the steering. He accompanied us to a garage a few miles on. That garage happened to have a second-hand replacement steering block, and we were on the road again in just over an hour. We headed home to Athens and never got to Zanesville. We made frequent trips to Marietta in West Virginia which was less than an hour from Athens and to various places near Athens. We also went to Old Man’s Cave near Athens several times.

On the way back to New Zealand, we stopped in Los Angeles and rented a car. We drove to Phoenix, then to Flagstaff to see the Grand Canyon. We then drove to Las Vegas and spent a few nights staying at the Circus Circus Casino, before returning to Los Angeles.

On our way back to New Zealand, we stayed in Thailand. I finally got a haircut which did not involve a brushover, despite frequent warnings from the barber that I would have a bald spot.

Around this time, we bought a trampoline. Prahm soon became an expert at using it. I buried its legs so that the mat was at ground level on three sides. We used to take the mat off each Guy Fawkes, and later would cover the mat with cardboard to stop any sky-rockets melting it. It has entertained a lot of people, not all of them children. As I write this, over forty years later, it is still in largely working condition. The mat is still good but the metal rods to hook the springs on are starting to give up through rust. Like me, it may still have a few years in it.

17.22 The trampoline

I was invited by Hakon Ringbom to go to Abo Akademi, in Turku in Finland for one semester in 1990. Abo Akademi is a Swedish medium university, but in the English Department, classes are taught in English. Swedish is an official language in Finland, and is spoken by about 10% of the population. It was our first visit to Europe. By now, Prahm was seventeen and in his final years at Wellington High School. By coming, he would miss almost half a year of school, but he agreed to bring his textbooks and work his way through them. Finland was not yet part of the EU, and the Berlin wall was about to fall when we were there. We had learned some Finnish, but shopping was a bit of a struggle. Our apartment was owned by the Donner Foundation which supported Abo Akademi and overlooked the Aura river, just one block from the town square. It was above Olavin Krouvi (Olaf's Pub). The view from our window had barely changed in at last two hundred years. We arrived at the end of winter and there was still snow, and on some nights, we could see the river freeze. The apartment was centrally heated. The bread in Finland was very good, probably the best I have eaten. We travelled to Sweden on the ferries between Turku and Stockholm (the Viking Line and the Silja Line). We went to Norway. We took the train to Moscow and stayed with May and Yip, meeting up with Brett and Toi in Moscow.

When we left, we travelled to Denmark and the Netherlands, and then went on to Munich to stay with Karl and Jiri. They took us to Neuschwanstein castle and around Munich. From Munich we flew to Thessaloniki for the AILA conference and after went to Athens.

17.23 Piti, Malcolm Jiri, Karl, Marta, Jim, Prapone Nitha in Wellington in 1991

We then hired a car and drove around the Peloponnese, including Delphi, Napflion, Sparta, and Pylos. We took the ferry from Greece to Brindisi and then travelled to Milan, Venice (staying in Verona), Sienna, Florence, and Rome. Peter Moody, an Australian, joined us for some of the journey in Italy. We had run into him in the railway station in Milan looking a bit distressed. We flew to Israel and met up with Batia Laufer and Svi, staying in Tel Aviv, Haifa and Jerusalem. After we arrived in Tel Aviv, Batia and Svi came to see us and took us to Jaffa. Svi helped us rent a car. We drove to the Dead Sea. We had asked our Israeli friends which places in Israel were not safe to travel in. They assured us you could go anywhere. We were on the road to Hebron when an army jeep with soldier with a machine gun in the back pulled in front of us and indicated that we should stop. He came to our car and said “This is a bad road. You should turn back”. Nitha looked at the road and said, “It looks like a good road to me.” “There are bad people on this road. Wind up your windows. Don’t drive too fast. Don’t stop.” By this time, I was getting nervous. We turned around and then a few miles on we saw a bus parked across the road blocking the road. I started weighing up possibilities. Fortunately, it was trying to turn around, and we were able to carry on without stopping.

We went to see Batia and Svi and family in Haifa. While in Jerusalem we roamed around the city and went to hear a Mormon choir with Andrew Cohen. A somewhat surreal experience – fresh-faced American Mormons teaching the world to sing in perfect harmony with a spectacular view of the ancient city of Jerusalem as a backdrop. When we got back to New Zealand, Prahm, with the kind help of Jane Gilbert, successfully completed his school year.

Pa and Gung visited us in New Zealand in 1990, and we toured the North Island.

17.24 Pa up against Wally Watson, former North Island snooker champ

17.25 Pa, Bert Willcox, Nitha Gaye, Tracy in the Ohakune shop

The following year (1991), I was promoted to reader, helped by the publication of *Teaching and Learning Vocabulary* in 1990.

In 1991, Nitha's father died. It was not unexpected as he suffered from severe asthma. Bovorn briefly entered the monkhood to gain merit for his grandfather.

17.26 Neung (Serb's son), Bamrung's mother, Bovorn

17.27 Nitha, Mother, Paul, Prahm

17.28 On the boat to scatter the ashes

We had managed to save some money and so in 1992 we built the guest house, a single room with a bathroom and sleeping loft.

## Chapter 18 Temple University Japan and New Zealand

In the early 1990s, Rod Ellis was invited to give a plenary address at CLESOL in Auckland. He was teaching at Temple University in Japan. Temple University Japan is part of Temple University in Philadelphia. I contacted Rod, who I had not met before, and suggested that he should fly in to Wellington rather than Auckland, and I would drive him up to Auckland, having a look at the North Island (Ohakune and Rotorua) on the way. He was so taken with New Zealand that he eventually took up a professor's position at the University of Auckland. As a result of his visit, in 1992, I was invited to do a distinguished lecturer seminar at Temple University Japan. A distinguished lecturer presentation involved teaching a weekend in Tokyo (six hours each day), having the weekdays free to travel around, and then teaching the same weekend course again in Osaka. The first three hours of the seminar was open to the public and could be attended by a large number of people. I found that the way to manage the seminar was to treat it as eight classes of roughly an hour and a half each. My first seminar, at Takadanobaba, was enthusiastically received and was the start of a long relationship with TUJ.

18.1 Paul and Rod Ellis at Yutenji, Tokyo in 1992

The graduate program in Education at TUJ included Masters and Doctoral study. About 50% of the students were Japanese who wanted a western-style education and to learn a different approach to language teaching and the other 50% were largely United States expatriates (with the occasional Australian, Brit or New Zealander) who had Japanese partners or some lasting commitment to Japan. The fees were high, and most students were doing part-time study while holding down a full-time teaching job. They were very keen students who wanted to get the most out of their study. Motivation was never an issue. The program was run by Ken Schaefer with Gladys Valcourt in Osaka. Our visit in 1992 was the first of seventeen visits, nine of which were for the distinguished lecturer series, one lasting a year (1994-1996), one for six months (January to June 1998), and four for one semester.

Because the regular graduate school in education classes at TUJ were predominantly for part-timers, they were held from 6pm to 9pm in the evenings on weekdays, and 2pm to 5pm on

Saturdays, with occasional classes on Sundays to meet demand. This schedule meant that weekdays were largely free and there was plenty of time to look around Tokyo or Osaka, and plenty of time to do research and writing. An opportunity that I took advantage of.

On our first visit in 1992, I taught the weekend seminar in Tokyo, and we stayed with Rod Ellis and Takayo at Yutenji. During the week we travelled to Kyoto and stayed at the Nishinoki Inn, run by an elderly Japanese couple whose daughter had married an American and now lived in Atlanta. They spoke some English and were welcoming to foreigners. It was a great Japanese experience – futons, elaborate Japanese breakfasts, and shoji screens for the room. We had a good look around Kyoto including Kiyomizudera, Ryoanji, Kinkakuji, Ginkakuji, and Nijo palace. When it came time to go to Osaka, we went to the station and got on a local train. I was pretty sure I had the right train but to make sure, I looked around the carriage and saw a scholarly looking young lady and asked her, "Is this the train to Osaka?" She looked horrified and buried her face in her hands. A man near the front of the carriage said "Yes, Osaka". We were sitting in the same row as the young woman but across the aisle. When the train started going, she took out a book and started reading it, seemingly without any great difficulty. I dropped my pen on the floor and bent down to pick it up and looked at the title of the book – *The Macroeconomics of Agriculture* in English. When we got to Osaka and stepped off the train, she came up to us and said, very deliberately, "Where are you going?" I was sure she had been practising that sentence for at least several minutes. We told her and she said, "Follow me." We managed to chat, and it turned out she was student doing Masters' study in economics. As well as helping us get where we were going, she provided me with a great example of the need for fluency development practice in a language course. A story I have used many times to make that point. I still remember the number of the hotel room we stayed in in Osaka – itchy, itchy, itchy, knee (1112), though the name of the hotel is long gone from my memory.

By New Zealand standards, TUJ paid well. For the weekend distinguished lecturer seminars, the pay was the airfare plus 500,000 Yen, plus the Tokyo to Osaka trip on the shinkansen (bullet train). Out of that I had to pay for meals and accommodation and any other travel. If both Nitha and I went, as we usually did, we broke even. Essentially a free holiday in Japan for nine days for a couple of weekends work. When I taught a semester or more, we could save about half of the income, as our accommodation was heavily subsidized and I got paid extra for extra classes. The savings from the full year I taught there in 1994-1995 paid for the first extension to Prahm's house (the bedroom down below).

We enjoyed living in Japan. It was apartment living and we soon adapted to the food and lifestyle. In 1994-1995, we lived in Kichijoji, a kind of up-market vaguely hippy suburb. We went to classes in Japanese at Mitaka run by the local government twice a week in the morning. They were taught by Nozaki, Megami, Natsuho and Sekiguchi sensei. When we walked from the station to the classes we passed the Pachinko parlour, with a queue of devoted players impatiently waiting for it to open. Sun Road in Kichijoji was a typical covered Japanese shopping street. There was an excellent Indian restaurant (Samrat) as well as pizza places (Shakeys) where slender Japanese schoolkids would eat large quantities of pizza. Nozaki-sensei later visited us in New Zealand and we met her when we went back to Japan.

The TUJ graduate program was at Takadanobaba. I took a train to Ogikubo and then walked about a kilometre to TUJ. It took me about half an hour or so. Ken Schaefer offered me plenty of extra teaching, and I was kept busy planning and teaching classes at both doctorate and Masters level.

18.2 Nitha, Ken Schaefer, Paul, Noel Houck

18.3 Tomoko, Harumi, Tsuyuki in a TUJ Osaka class

In 1994, Prahm graduated with BA Honours in History. It was a subject he loved and one of the most satisfying days of my life was when in his second year of study, he said to me “I don’t know why you study Linguistics, History is so interesting”. Most university students do

their degree without loving their subject. The lucky few, and he was one, really enjoy what they study.

He got a job working at Defence Headquarters. He liked the work, mainly because of his workmates, but realized that a degree in history was not going to earn him a good living. Eventually, with Tina's support, he enrolled for a degree in Law. He realised in the first week of classes that this was not a subject he was going to love, but he quickly completed the degree. Then like Tina, he sought Government contracts. Over the years, he had a wide range of various contracts, each one very different from the others but requiring thoughtful planning and problem-solving. He managed his money well, and started investing in the stock market.

18.4 Prahm admitted to the bar in 2004

Around 1994, we started going on a summer holiday each year to Gisborne with my sister Betty to visit the uncles and aunts. These were very relaxing visits, and we usually introduced Betty to some new food including Indian food, pizza, hamburgers and so on, though she drew the line at brown coloured lettuce. The visits continued as the number of uncles and aunts decreased until finally, we were just visiting Bernice. Roy and Colleen Skuse were always included in our visits, and they sometimes hosted the shared meal. The trip to Gisborne typically included lunch with Barry and Trish Ashwell in Woodville.

18.5 Smiths, Skuses and Ashwells at Meng Foon's restaurant in Gisborne in 1994

In 2004, Tina and Prahm made their relationship official by getting married.

18.6 Prahm and Tina wedding 2004 (Wayne, Tiana, Tina, Prahm, Blair)

Tina and Tiana had been living with Prahm for a while. We first met Tiana when she was around six years old in 1998. We would have formal tea parties with a teapot, small cups and cake. She particularly liked Madeira cake, which she called Butcher's cake (I think from an ad on TV involving Madeira butter cake). We played cricket, which was mild compared to the boxing and even netball that she later took up. How quickly she grew! Her father, Harold Wereta, was Maori and spoke Maori. Tiana attended Kohanga Reo and then bilingual classes at Thorndon School. Prahm and Tiana were immediately best friends and have remained that way. One of our early memories was just before Christmas. We asked what she wanted for Christmas. Her eyes lit up, and then went solemn. "I will be grateful for whatever I get" she intoned. Harold would have been proud of her. He had warned her not to expect too much for Christmas. For the early Christmases, she slept at our place, because we had a chimney and a modest Christmas tree. She tried to stay awake until midnight but never got much beyond 10 o'clock.

When she was around eight years old, she went off to stay with her grandmother Mata in Rarotonga. She came back looking worse for wear, bitten by mosquitos. While there, she had to do work around the house, collecting papaya to feed the pigs and so on. When we said a few months later that we were planning to go to Rarotonga for a holiday, she looked at us as though we were mad. "You don't want to go there! There's nothing there! You have to get your own breakfast even if you are a visitor."

When her grandmother was in New Zealand, she drove to New World and sent Tiana in to buy a newspaper. She said, "You can use the extra money to buy a drink". Tiana came back with the drink and some chocolate but no newspaper. "Where's the newspaper?" "There wasn't enough money."

18.7 Nitha and Tiana.

18.8 Winning Kiwi-cricket where everyone wins

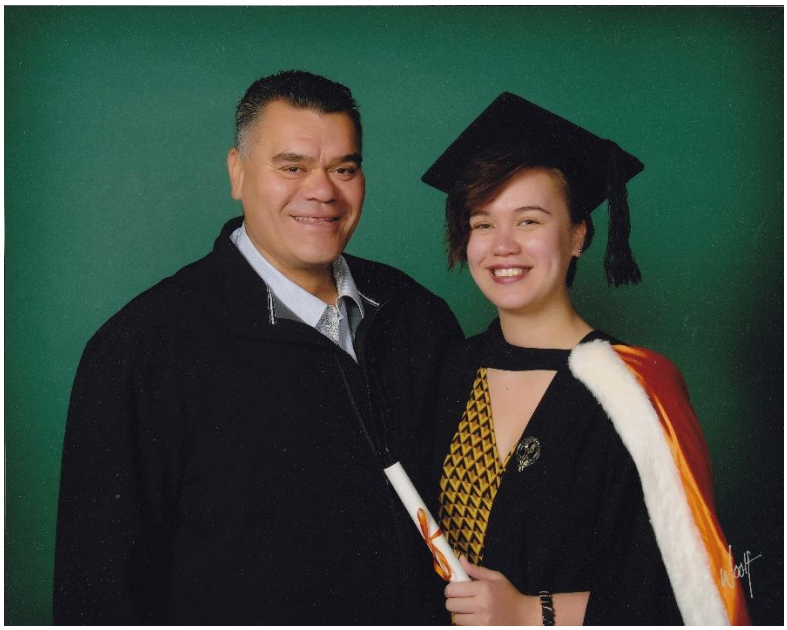
Nitha became a fan of netball and went with Tina to a lot of Tiana's games, often taking her own seat with her. I was amazed at the extent and efficiency of the organisation of amateur netball in Wellington. The netball courts at Hataitai were something to see on a Saturday – all courts fully used, games started on time, not a minute wasted, parents dropping off and collecting players of all ages, and all done with a confident, well organised efficiency.

Tiana did well at school and aimed to go to university (although she may not have realised that at the time). There were small adventures at Thorndon School. Tina went along to complain that Tiana said "Shit!" at home and she definitely did not learn it at home. Unfortunately, Tina dropped something with the teachers standing around, and said "Shit!". Problem solved.

At one time there was a plague of head lice at school. Tiana tried wearing a hat, but that was not enough. Tina had to comb them out of Tiana's hair, to much complaint. We found out a few days later that the neighbours were considering reporting Tina for child abuse based on the extended suffering they heard. An explanation quickly cleared that up.

When she reached seventeen, she decided that she was going to live with her boyfriend, Shane. She had got hold of the relevant statute and had underlined the parts that supported her case and presented it to her mother. They ended up living in the guest house for several years. It was a good solution – not at home, but at home. The same solution that worked for Prahm when he left secondary school, except he moved to 37 Warwick Street. For both Prahm and Tiana living away from your parents in the later teenage years was good for

family relationships. Parents were more appreciated, and parents did not have to endure the frustrations of teenage behaviour.



18.9 Tiana at graduation with her father Harold

## Chapter 19 The Wellington Theravada Buddhist Association

The early history of the Wellington Theravada Buddhist Association is included here because the setting up of the Association and fund-raising played such a dominant part in our lives from the early 1980s on. Kanitha was the first secretary for the Association, and I was one of the longest serving committee members, serving somewhere between twenty to thirty years. I was also heavily involved in fund-raising through food fairs and Asian dinners.

### The beginning of the Wellington Theravada Buddhist Association (WTBA) (1982-1989)

This brief history is written and checked by a few of those involved in setting up the WTBA (Paul & Kanitha Nation, Denis Win Thein), using information from memory, written records such as minutes of meetings, newsletters and various other documents. It has also been checked against personal diary entries. Those involved in setting up the monastery are an aging group, and it was thought to be a good idea to do this while they were still around, and before memories faded and documents were lost. The minutes of the WTBA meetings and various other documents have now been scanned for the seven years from 1983 to 1989 inclusive. Their file names are in this format *1983 WTBA minutes docs.pdf*, and copies of these files have been given to the monastery and various friends of the monastery as a form of back-up for the files. They cover the setting up of the WTBA up to the planning for the Sala.

### Chronology

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **1982** | 8 August 1982 | Meeting to set up WTBA |
| | 2 October 1982 | First Asian Food Fair for fundraising |
| **1983** | 12-17 February 1983 | Ajarn Sumedho & Ajarn Thitipanno visit Wellington |
| | 4 May 1983 | WTBA registered |
| | 9 May 1983 | Purchase of 17 Rakau Grove, Stokes Valley |
| | 4 September 1983 | IRD recognized WTBA as a charitable institution |
| | 13 November 1983 | Blessing of land by Ven. Khantipalo |
| **1984** | 20-30 March 1984 | Ajarn Sumedho visits |
| **1985** | 8 July 1985 | Ajarn Sumedho brings Ven. Viradhammo and Ven. Thanavaro |
| **1986** | 5 February 1986 | Building starts on the upper house |
| | | Arrival of Ajarn Subbato |
| | 20 August 1986 | Sangha moves to Stokes Valley |
| **1987** | 8 March 1987 | Official opening of Bodhinyanarama |
| **1988** | 8 August 1988 | Purchase of 15 Rakau Grove from Paul Ratcliffe |
| | | Departure of Ajarn Thanavaro |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | Arrival of Ajarn Karuniko |
| **1990** | 1990-1994 | Sala building, designed by Hugh Tennant |
| **1994** | 1 Jan 1994 | Arrival of Ajarn Vajiro |
| **1995** | | Departure of Ajarn Viradhammo |
| **1996** | | Bell stolen |
| **1999** | 1999 | Stupa building due initially to the efforts of Rudra de Souza |
| | 2 May 1999 | Stupa consecration ceremony |
| **2000** | | Ajarn Sumangalo acting Abbott |
| **2002** | | Ajarn Sucinno acting Abbott |
| **2006** | | Ajarn Thiradhammo appointed Abbott |
| **2011** | | Ajarn Kusalo appointed Abbott |

**Beginnings**

The WTBA primarily originated from a small group of people who came together to learn about Buddhism and meditation. They had come to New Zealand from a variety of Buddhist countries – Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, Sri Lanka and Laos – and wanted to understand more about the religion they had experienced in their early lives. They were helped in this by older people from the same countries who also lived in New Zealand. The most influential of these, especially for the Thais in Wellington, was Mrs Somsri Parker who supported the informal group by providing books to read and making her house available for them to get together. The group began meeting, roughly every month, around 1982, and used to meet in various people's houses.

Largely through the efforts of Denis Win Thein, the meditation group decided to set up a more formal association, and a meeting was held in the Multicultural Resource Centre off Taranaki Street, Wellington on Sunday 8 August 1982 to do this. The meeting was attended by around 40 people. The following committee was chosen – President: Denis Win Thein, Vice-president: Somsri Parker, Secretary: Rob Cook (Rob later resigned and was replaced by Kanitha Nation), Treasurer: An Tan, Auditor: Supavadi Grey. At that time there was already a Wellington Buddhist group consisting mainly of Mabel San Nyein (Denis's mother, also known as Aunty Mabel), Somsri Parker and Mrs Gurusinghe. They met together, and gathered money to support visiting monks and to rent space to provide public teaching sessions. The new association included those people and took over the roles of that initial group.

Ajarn Munindo writes:

"Bhikshu Ham Wol had arranged for me to visit Wellington and to meet members of the Burmese community, in particular Aunty Mabel. She and her family had not seen a monk since leaving Burma as refugees some time before that and were very welcoming. The meeting turned out to be very significant. During my stay, Bhikshu Ham Wol and I were

walking down Manners Street when a newspaper photographer stopped us and asked if he could take our photograph for his newspaper. We agreed, and this led to a telephone call from the Royal Thai Embassy who, seeing a Buddhist monk in town, wanted the opportunity to offer alms food. As a result, we were invited to the home of the Secretary of the Royal Thai Embassy where we met one of the leaders of the local Thai community, Mrs Somsri Parker, who was very supportive. Soon after that I met another very important person, Mrs Gurusinghe.

“They asked me for advice on how to go about things, and I suggested they invite Ajarn Sumedho to visit New Zealand. Ajarn Sumedho had already gained some experience establishing a monastery in Thailand and another one in England. He was also highly respected within the monastic and lay Buddhist community.”

The religious direction of the association was provided by a visit from 12-17 February 1983 from Ajarn Sumedho who had been invited to talk at the Theravada Buddhist Association in Auckland and was also invited to come to Wellington. He was accompanied by Ajarn Thitipanno. They stayed in Paul and Kanitha Nation’s house while Kanitha went to stay with a neighbour, and Paul quickly learned the duties of temple boy.

19.1 Ajarn Sumedho and Ajarn Thitipanno at Somsri’s house

Ajarn Sumedho offered to help the WTBA set up a forest monastery. It seems likely that his decision to help was strongly influenced by the enthusiasm and energy shown by the committee. An additional factor may have been the willingness of the Wellington group to set up a forest monastery. There was already a Theravadan Association in Auckland which had bought a house in the city, but Ajahn Sumedho’s interest lay in a forest monastery.

On 4 May 1983, the association was registered as the WTBA, and on 4 September 1983, it was recognized by the Inland Revenue Department as a charitable organisation.

**Buying the land**

When asked about a possible site for a monastery, Ajarn Sumedho suggested that the WTBA should look for a site of at least 30 acres, not too far from the city with forest and possibly a stream. Under the enthusiastic pressure from Mrs Parker, a few possible sites were investigated, but they were not suitable because of their location or lack of forest cover. She

sent us out to look at one in Stokes Valley which was just over 30 acres, not too far from the city with forest on both sides of the valley and a stream flowing through it. It was covered with native bush, had reserved land on several sides, and was a watershed protection area with limited building allowed. It was perfect. The land had been previously intended for a large housing subdivision, but a flood in Stokes Valley which killed one person led to the realization that the land needed to remain covered with trees to protect the watershed area to prevent future flooding. It was then subdivided into three blocks with one dwelling permitted on each block.

On 9 May 1983, the 30.7 acre block of land at 17 Rakau Grove, Stokes Valley was purchased, costing $29,500.00. A 50% deposit ($14, 750) was paid, with the WTBA needing to pay $344 per month for 5 years. It was a struggle to raise the money. The WTBA had some money, initially around $3000, but not nearly enough. We had various committee meetings to work out how to raise the money with individuals pledging donations or regular automatic payments. A generous donation from Thailand from the family of Duangrudee (Dtun) Markes helped make up much of the shortfall. When looking at the list of people who donated for the land, the most striking thing is the variety of countries of origin -- Burma, Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, New Zealand, Sri Lanka, and Thailand. The committee also reflected this diversity.

On Sunday 13 November 1983, Ven. Khantipalo carried out a blessing of the land ceremony in the present upper car park. A large group of people attended this.

19.2 Ajarn Khantipalo with Sirena and Somsri Parker

We had working bees on the land to begin making paths. They were very enjoyable affairs, the highpoint being a shared lunch.

From 20-30 March 1984, there was a visit by Ajarn Sumedho to look at the land and to discuss the plan of a building with architect Bill Alington from Alington Group Architects. At the time, we considered that what is now the upper house would easily be large enough for us to have meetings and to hold ceremonies. It turned out to be large enough for committee meetings but nowhere near large enough for ceremonies. We greatly underestimated the support that the monastery would have.

19.3 Ajarn Sumedho and Prahm at Stokes Valley

The logo for the WTBA which appears on its letters was created by Nat (Supavadee) Grey. It consists of a Bodhi leaf with a stupa on some hills. Inspired, when you consider that it was created before the stupa was built.

**Fundraising**

Given the predominance of Asian members, it is not surprising that the major ways of fund raising all involved food. We held Asian Food Fairs about four times a year (mainly in the Wesley Church Hall in Taranaki Street), we held Asian dinners about twice a year, we catered for the occasional conference dinner or lunch, and we had a stall at several community events.

The first Asian Food Fair was held on 2 October 1982. At this time there were no Thai, Khmer, Lao, Indian or Sri Lankan restaurants, and only one Burmese restaurant, and so the food fairs were very popular. Probably the best organized community for the food fairs was the Sri Lankans. Gita Gunatilleke arranged it so there was a regular supply of Sri Lankan food appearing from when the food fair started around 10am until it ended around 2pm. There was Thai food (deserts by Kanitha Nation, noodles by Sireena Worboys and Nat Grey, curry puffs and satay by Pen Askwith, Pum Lodder, and Doi Bartos), Malaysian food from May Yip, meatballs from Nipa and Dtun Markes, Burmese food (curries and pakora from Aunty Mabel and other Burmese families including the Myints, and fried delicacies from Cedric), Sri Lankan food (curries, poppers, deserts, from people too numerous to mention but who were all long-term supporters of the monastery), Lao food (organised by Supong and Sawaisuk), vegetarian mysteries from the three musketeers (Tim, Andrew and Julie) and

Khmer delicacies. We had occasional visits from a Health Inspector who turned out to be an enthusiastic customer.

19.4 Kanitha and her desserts at an Asian Food Fair

The food was delicious, and a reasonable proportion of the sales involved the sellers selling to each other -- Thai selling to Burmese, Burmese selling to Sri Lankans, Sri Lankans selling to Khmer and so on. There were regular buyers who asked to be phoned up a week before the fair so that they did not miss it. A successful food fair involved a complete sell-out and that was often achieved.

They were not solely food fairs. Tim and Leslie Haiselden ran a white elephant stall which sold everything (including the occasional white elephant).


19.5 The advertisement for the food fairs

The work involved hiring the hall, arranging advertising in local newspapers and on radio (inspired by Stephen Hall), putting up signs (made by Marie Greeks), buying paper plates,

containers for the takeaways and spoons and forks, setting up tables (covered with white newsprint paper provided by Denis who worked for the *Evening Post*), finding boards to go under the portable gas rings so that the tables didn't get burnt (some did!), cooking and selling the food (about half of it was pre-prepared and the rest was cooked in the hall), cleaning up afterwards, and best of all collecting and counting the money.

During the food fair, the monks would visit and go on alms round with a surprised New Zealander asking "Who are those dudes in the yellow suits?"

The food fairs not only raised a lot of money for the monastery, but also brought the various communities together for a common unselfish purpose. The sellers typically gave all their takings to the monastery, some taking out their expenses, but none making a personal profit from it.

By mid-afternoon on a food fair Saturday, most people were exhausted, but were thrilled by the fact that the work had made the dream of setting up and maintaining a Buddhist monastery a stronger reality.

Eventually, the income from the fairs became smaller as more Asian restaurants opened in Wellington. The people organizing the fairs and providing the food began to suffer burnout, and so the fairs eventually came to an end. The last food fair was held on 16 March 1996, 13½ years after the first one. In the early days the food fairs raised around $1000 each time. At the height of their popularity the amount sometimes reached $3000. The last food fair raised only $600.

Quite a lot of money for the monastery came from staff in the Thai embassy, from visitors to the embassy, and from tour groups who were encouraged to put Stokes Valley on their itinerary. Such groups, with elderly members, also encouraged the development of the toilet block.

**The arrival of the monks**

On 8 July 1985, Ajarn Sumedho brought two monks, Ven. Viradhammo and Ven. Thanavaro, to stay in New Zealand. Gary Page was the first anagarika.

19.6 Ajarns Viradhammo and Thanavaro at an early beach retreat -- Gary Page in front, Kanitha on the right in a headscarf

Thanavaro writes of his first four years in New Zealand:

"It was spring of 1984 and Ajarn Sumedho had just returned from New Zealand. Word went around Chithurst that a monastery was to be started in that far away country. Who was to be sent? Nobody knew. At that time, I found the idea of travelling to New Zealand challenging, if not frightening. But as it happened, one afternoon I was talking to Ajarn Sumedho in his kuti. As I was mending one of his robes, a great feeling of gratitude overwhelmed me and quite out of the blue. I said: "Tan Ajarn, soon I will be six years in the robes, if I can help anywhere in the world don't hesitate to send me". After a pause Ajarn Sumedho looked at me with a very gentle smile and said: "What about New Zealand?" I replied "Yes, even New Zealand." I could not believe that I had said it! It wasn't very long after that Ajarn Viradhammo and myself were landing at Auckland Airport. I remember feeling a little trepidation as the plane made a gentle curve in the air looking for that land on the long white cloud. Getting through customs took a long time, but when we finally got through, we met Ajarn Sumedho who was waiting for us in the lounge. He had arrived the day before from the States. It was a happy reunion. During the first couple of weeks in Auckland and later in Wellington we were presented to the various supporters. Often Ajarn Sumedho would introduce us adding "They are the best men for the job." Both Ajarn Viradhammo and myself had been involved in the setting up of Chithurst Monastery as well as the (freezing) Harnham Vihara in Northumberland. We knew that our new task was not going to be much easier, yet we felt welcomed and encouraged by our new Buddhist friends who for years had dreamed of having Bhikkhus resident in their country. To the European mind, New Zealand evokes dreams of a far country full of natural beauty. Some folk even make it all this way for a memorable holiday. But it was clear to the two of us that there was work to be done and we were ready for action. A property had already been purchased in Stokes Valley, but the construction of a residence had suffered some delay. Our first year therefore was spent in a Wellington flat [provided free of charge by Mrs Somsri Parker] where we kept to a monastic schedule of morning and evening meditation and met many more people interested in the spiritual path. During this time, we became acquainted with our lay people as we travelled between here and Auckland and later to other towns. In this way we hoped to encourage both a friendship and common purpose that to this day is indispensable. When the development of Stokes Valley property was under way, Ajarn Viradhammo did not hesitate to leave the comfort of our city residence to work in the bush. It was clear that if the Sangha was to be established in this country, we needed to take the initiative and get to work. In doing this we were joined by a Kiwi monk, Venerable Subbato. He had just arrived from England and was visiting his family who lived in Auckland. During the first Rains Retreat I was left in charge as Ajarn Viradhammo was in Canada with his dying father. Subbato and I shared a small kuti with Anagarika Gary. Those were pioneering days. We would shower outside with cold water after a long day of physical work. Many can remember the bhikkhus leading the laypeople carrying gravel building materials up the hill to be used for the construction of paths and kutis. We didn't mind our long days of labour, though, at times we were chided for working too hard. Nevertheless, we were not deterred from giving our best according to what was appropriate at the time. If dreams were to become reality, we could not just sit around motionless. Today, after four years the monastery is a living centre for the practice of that knowledge which liberates the heart. Fulfilling the wishes of Ajarn Sumedho who had called the new centre "Bodhinyanarama", "The garden of enlightened knowledge", as a token of gratitude to his teacher; the Venerable Bodhinyana more widely known as Ajarn Chah. Now

at the monastery it is possible to listen to the Dhamma, practice meditation, offer Dana and chant in praise of the Buddha. The Bhikkhu Sangha gathers regularly in concord to recite the Patimokkha. Recently we had our first Ordination Ceremony, the first ever to be performed in this country. With these conditions fulfilled we can now say that the Buddhasasana is firmly established on New Zealand soil! What has been accomplished externally is the result of combined efforts from our lay people and Sangha, indeed an excellent foundation for the development of that boundless state for which this work is only the means not the end. With the building of the new sala more people will be able to gather in harmony for the practice of Dhamma. Many friends have already offered to help with this new project, and it is inspiring for me to see that this has taken on a momentum of its own. In a sense Bodhinyanarama has entered a second phase. So when Ajarn Sumedho invited me to return to Europe I felt that the time was right. Also, I will have an opportunity to visit my parents. What I leave behind is what I have been able to offer. What I take with me is a debt of gratitude; to Ajarn Viradhammo for his guidance and compassion; to the monks and Lamas resident in New Zealand for their friendship; to the laypeople for their care and support. Although I will be missing that beautiful evening sky and the stars for which the Southern Hemisphere is so fortunate, I shall attempt to keep the practice of spaciousness in mind. Boarding my plane on the 14th of November [1988] and flying to Rome, I hope to meet Tan Ajarn Sumedho who may again be waiting for me in the airport lounge."

Thanavaro trained as a Buddhist monk in the Theravada Thai Forest Tradition. He practiced under the guidance of Venerable Ajarn Sumedho for 18 years and spent time training with other teachers in various monasteries in England and New Zealand. In March 1990, he established the first Theravadan Monastery in Italy, giving Italians the opportunity to share in the richness of this ancient tradition. In 1996 he decided to continue his spiritual journey as a lay teacher.

**Building**

On 5 February 1986, building started on the upper house. The work was done by the building firm of Jason Russ, for a cost of $80,160. On 20 August 1986, the Sangha moved to Stokes Valley, and from then on committee meetings were held at the monastery.

On 8 August 1988, the second piece of land and building (15 Rakau Grove) was bought - 13 acres for $120,000. It was owned by Paul Ratcliffe. Paul had already built a small house with an attached garage but wanted to sell up and move out of Wellington. At a committee meeting, John Bardisban was charged with negotiating with Paul Ratcliffe for the purchase of the land. He was told "Don't come back without it." The WTBA borrowed $50,000 from the Housing Corporation at $700 per month for 25 years. It was completely paid off in July 1994!

19.7 The upper building at Stokes Valley

**Why did the monastery succeed?**

There were several factors that led to the successful establishment of the monastery. Firstly, there was a small but strongly committed group that wanted it, and the people in that group were willing to do the necessary work. The core of this group was around seven or eight people – not too big to reach a consensus, and not too small to overburden each individual with too much work or responsibility. The people in the group were also prepared to stay on the committee for as long as it took. Secondly, the group represented a diverse community and there were members of each group on the committee. Having a Burmese president always seemed a very good idea because the Burmese community was so small that no one could accuse the Burmese of trying to take over the Association. The monastery was thus seen as not being a Burmese or Thai or Sri Lankan monastery, but was seen as a Theravadan monastery serving all the relevant communities. Thirdly, the committee operated not by voting but by reaching a consensus. Matters were discussed and eventually a decision was made. It was not voted on but represented the agreement of all members of the committee. This meant that meetings were usually quite long, but there were no members feeling disgruntled that their views were not heard or adopted.

19.8 During the building of the Sala (The architect, Hugh Tennant, is third from the left)

In 1994, the Sala building was judged to be one of the top six buildings designed in New Zealand in that year. Hugh Tennant's work had begun to receive the recognition it deserved. It received a related award in 2023.

**The sangha**

Because this is an account of the setting up of an association rather than a local history of the growth of Buddhism, there has only been passing mention of the sangha involved. Leaving the account like this would give a distorted picture of the beginning of the WTBA, because Ajarn Munindo, Ajarn Sumedho, Ajarn Khantipalo, Ajarn Viradhammo, Ajarn Thanavaro, Ajarn Subbato, Ajarn Thiradhammo, Ajarn Vajiro and other sangha played pivotal roles in the early life of the WTBA.

Ajarn Sumedho provided a clear goal for those associated with WTBA and inspired us to keep on with the often daunting task of setting up an association and a forest monastery. His choice of Ajarn Viradhammo and Ajarn Thanavaro was clear-sighted indeed, because they were exactly the right monks to pull the Buddhist community together and to lead by example. As Ajarn Thanavaro mentions in his account above, the committee were very concerned that the sangha were working far too hard, and we were worried that their intense physical labour on the land would be bad for their health. So, we kept telling them to take it easier, to little effect.

There is no doubt that Ajarn Viradhammo's laid back style and his concern for consensus made the work of the committee harmonious. This was quite an achievement given the determined and driven nature of many of the committee members. At times it was easy to

lose sight of the spiritual goals of what we were trying to achieve in our more pressing concern for concrete achievements. Ajarn Viradhammo, however, did not lose sight of this, and I recall in the later years of the food fairs his counselling us that if the joy had gone out of this method of fundraising, we should then consider some other means of supporting the monastery. This was wise and empathetic advice.

There is also no doubt that attending his and Ajarn Sumedho's Dhamma talks and retreats kept the spiritual goal clear to us. A committee is not an attraction for supporters, but wise teachers and practitioners of the Dhamma are. Without good monks, the work of the committee can become burdensome and fruitless. Because of the Ajarns, the WTBA did not have those problems. Although it may occasionally have been a struggle to find committee members, it was never a problem to find supporters. The Ajarns ensured that. As a result of their example, the monastery quickly grew and prospered. We were indeed fortunate in the monks who chose to lead us.

Now the monastery is very securely established, and thanks to Hugh Tennant's design is a very beautiful place.

## Chapter 20 My professional life

This chapter shows how my interest in the teaching and learning of vocabulary began and traces some of the main ideas and influences behind my approach to vocabulary and teaching methodology. It was first written as I entered semi-retirement, and this is undoubtedly reflected in the chapter.

I went to Victoria University of Wellington in 1962 at the age of seventeen and I have never left. As a student or staff member, I have always had a connection with the university.

Even as a young child, I always wanted to be a teacher. This is partly because in my small hometown of Ohakune (population 1,500 at the time) there were not a lot of jobs on the menu, but it is also because I had teachers I admired. I went to university with a teacher's scholarship which paid my fees and a generous living allowance and obligated me to teach for the same number of years that I held the scholarship. I was the only person to go to university from my hometown that year, and there were no others studying in the university that I knew from school. I stayed in Weir House, a men's hostel near the university. This was very fortunate because it immediately provided me with ninety people I quickly came to know, and meant that I got involved in lots of things, most of which did not greatly help my study, but which were great fun. I have to admit that I almost failed my first year at university. I got 27% for French reading knowledge, scraped a 50% pass for History, and got Bs for English and Psychology. I mended my ways in my second year, but it took me nearly a year and a half to figure out what university was all about.

In my third year at university, the very first undergraduate course in descriptive linguistics was introduced in the university by Professor Frank Brosnahan, and I enrolled in it. It provided a basic description of phonemics, morphology, and phrase structure analysis. It was well organised and well taught, and I really enjoyed it. As a result, the next year, when I was studying for my Master of Arts, I enrolled in the newly introduced course in transformational grammar. There were only two of us in the class, and the professor was only about two pages ahead of us in the book. At the end of the year, we were told that there was a job available in the English Language Institute in the university. I was the only one to apply for it, and after an interview with the director, H.V. George, I was given the job as a junior lecturer. One of the significant points in my life.

20.1 H.V. George in Malaya (3rd from left in the front row)

At that time, there were only six of us on the staff (H.V. George, Brian Smith, Helene Woolston, Ron Fountain, Pat McEldowney, and me). We were later joined by Helen Barnard, John Rogers, Caroline Scott (later McGhie), Janet McCallum, Gerry Meister, Jack Richards, Tom Gati, Ian Thomas, Thoron Hollard, and Dorothy Brown). During the academic year we did in-service teacher training for teachers from a very wide range of countries largely under the Colombo Plan. As I basically knew nothing about TESOL, I attended all the lectures given by H.V. George and helped run the associated tutorials. I learnt an enormous amount on the job. A lot of it was learnt by watching H.V. George teach. He was a natural teacher, and I used to carry a small notebook with me which I called my methods book, and I used that to note down features that struck me about the way he taught. I still have the two notebooks. The final exam for the Dip TESL was a practical one. Each candidate had to do a piece of microteaching. This had the washback effect of making our course very practical.

The teachers studying on the course for the Cert TESL or Dip TESL came from Pacific Island and Southeast and East Asian countries. They were all experienced teachers who came to New Zealand largely under scholarship from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in New Zealand to study for a year. I was younger than most of them, but they were all kind enough to be sympathetic towards me and help me in my teaching.

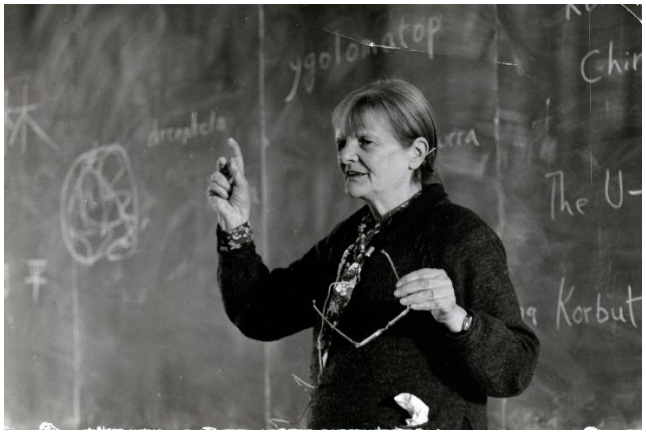
When the academic year was finished, the English Language Institute ran a pre-university course for foreign students. We taught on this course. This was an excellent arrangement, because it provided inexperienced staff like me with the chance to teach English. Experienced staff also had to keep their feet on the ground by showing that the things that they taught to teachers during the academic year had practical implications for language teaching. This meant that there was always a very strong connection between the teacher training that we did and the teaching of English to speakers of other languages. We not only taught about it, we also did it.

H.V. George was one of the big influences on my life. Before coming to New Zealand, he had taught in Malaya, Iraq, and India. If the word "guru" was to be applied to anybody in our field, he was the most suitable person to apply it to. He had a very strong interest in what is

now known as corpus linguistics, and just before coming to New Zealand had completed a very large frequency count of the verb forms of English. This was done before the days of computers, and later computer-based research has largely served to confirm his findings. His arrival marked the beginning of corpus-based language study at Victoria University, and this tradition continues.

He was a very unconventional person. He ran a very egalitarian department, and in spite of having to carry most of the substantial teaching himself, he always found time to talk things over. I thought he was great. We were allowed to get on and do the things that we thought we should do, and we always had his support. I remember doing a concordance-based study of the word "too". I gathered the instances by getting each of the students on the course to find ten examples from books they were reading and to write each one on a slip of paper that I had provided. With his encouragement, we quickly got the first copy of the Brown corpus in New Zealand on computer tape, which we ran on the university's newly installed mainframe computer. H.V. was very familiar with the work of Michael West and Harold Palmer and was a strong advocate of vocabulary control.

I remember H.V. commenting one day that I and my colleagues were among the first group of people to enter the profession of TESOL directly from university study. Like most others in the field at that time, he had drifted into English language teaching largely without any directly relevant academic background. All of his learning had been on the job.



20.2 Helen Barnard

One of the first things that he did after being appointed to the job of director of the English Language Institute was to arrange for the appointment of Helen Barnard who he knew from his time in India. He wanted her to write a set of booklets for the English Proficiency Program, and as soon as she arrived, she started doing that. The result was the first English course published by the newly created Newbury House, *Advanced English Vocabulary*. Helen was a remarkable person. She was tall and of rather frightening appearance, but she was one of the sweetest and gentlest people I have known. She was a vocabulary enthusiast, and I picked up a lot of my enthusiasm from her. *Advanced English Vocabulary* was the mainstay of our English Proficiency Program, both before and after it was published. I remember trialling her lessons during the summer course. We wrote a pre-test of the vocabulary for the week and a weekly post-test. There was a strong deliberate vocabulary teaching focus on the course, and the very clear goals generated a real sense of purpose in the program. I think the book sold well, particularly in the United States. When Rupert Ingram who had founded

Newbury House visited New Zealand to meet with Helen, I met with him too, and showed him the draft of a book I was working on called *Teaching and Learning Vocabulary*. He was interested in it and gave me some very useful advice that I have always tried to follow, "Try to answer questions that teachers ask".

**Indonesia: My first overseas teaching experience**

After two years of teaching at the ELI, I had a chance to teach part-time for one year at a teachers' college in Jogjakarta in Indonesia for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs while I did research for my unsupervised, misconceived and never-to-be-completed PhD. The Ministry saw it as a cheap way to begin an aid project for the teachers' college. The pay was minimal, and although I may have had the designation of foreign expert, I certainly had none of the privileges. I loved it. Jogjakarta was by far the most interesting place I have ever lived in.

As well as teaching a couple of courses on language teaching methodology at the teachers' college (IKIP Negeri Jogjakarta) and at Sanata Dharma, the Catholic teachers college, I also taught two English classes at a junior high school (SMP II) just along the street from the teachers' college. Both in the teachers' college and junior high school, conditions were basic. The blackboards were painted with ordinary black paint and were hard to write on. There were no copying facilities. By about 11 am it was so hot that that both teaching and learning were difficult. The walls of the classrooms were concrete for the bottom half and woven bamboo for the top half. The noise from one class easily affected the adjoining class. This meant that teaching had to be well adapted to the teaching conditions. The students were great, and the staff were very kind and supportive. I enjoyed the teaching, and it had the very positive effects of making me grateful for any small teaching aids that were available, and making me less reliant on such aids.

At the end of that year in Indonesia, I went to Thailand to get married, and we then returned to New Zealand. I was then re-employed at the ELI, this time as a lecturer, and after three years, we went back to Indonesia to the same teachers' college on another Ministry of Foreign Affairs contract. This then was truly the beginning of my academic career, because I then began to publish and seriously do research.

One of the first articles I wrote was called "Teaching vocabulary in difficult circumstances" (Nation, 1975). This title was deliberately chosen as homage to Michael West who had written a book called *Teaching English in Difficult Circumstances* (West, 1960) based on his experience of teaching English in Bengal (part of which is now Bangladesh). By that time, I had read a lot of West's work on vocabulary and reading, and was working my way through the journals available then to build up a collection of language teaching techniques. I put all these together in an unpublished collection called *Language Teaching Techniques*. I was determined to gather every language teaching technique and got very close to doing that. This collection continued to be a major source for the other books and articles I have worked on.

While in Indonesia, Gerry Meister and I set up very successful extensive reading programs for our classes, Emmy Quinn and I wrote and published a speed reading course written within the 1000 word level (*Speed Reading* Quinn and Nation, 1974), Gerry and I wrote and published two graded readers (now out of print but available on my web site) set in Indonesia, I adapted a reading course for Oxford University Press (*Guided English Reading*), and I wrote several articles that W. R. Lee was kind enough to publish in the *ELT Journal*. At

the same time, I supervised several theses, and these also resulted in publications. This productivity was largely due to what the Indonesians call ‘tidur siang”, otherwise known as siesta or the afternoon sleep. I would go to the teachers’ college at around 7 am and teach. Classes would end around 1 pm and I would go home and eat and then have my tidur siang. By 4 pm, I was ready for action again, and this was when the research, reading and writing was done. In effect, I had two fresh starts to the day. As always, I was strongly supported by Nitha as we struggled to raise Prahm with no parents or family nearby to call on for help and advice.

While teaching at the government teachers’ college (IKIP), I set aside Friday each week to teach at the Catholic teachers’ college called Sanata Dharma. Father Ernst Bolsius and Father van der Scheuren had been responsible for helping me meet up with Roger Long on my previous stay, and teaching at Sanata Dharma was an interesting contrast to the government teachers’ college. One of my former students and colleagues there, Johannes Bismoko, later took over a substantial role in the running of the college.

When I returned to the government teachers’ college in 2008 for a brief visit, it was pleasing to see that a large proportion of the staff was made up of our former students.

My time in Indonesia made me very conscious of the need to give teachers practical advice which will work within the considerable constraints of their teaching situation. It also made me confident that I could do work that was publishable.

**New Zealand and Thailand**

After three years in Indonesia, we returned to New Zealand. I had read Earl Stevick’s (1959) article in the journal *Language Learning* called "Technemes and the rhythm of class activity". This article put forward the interesting argument that you could tell if a change you had made to a technique made it a different technique by looking at the reaction of the students. If the change caught their attention, then you had a new techneme (a significantly different technique). This analytical approach to teaching techniques really appealed to me, and I started analysing the large collection of techniques that I had gathered to see if there was some underlying system which could be made to describe and to create new techniques. The resulting article was called "Creating and adapting language teaching techniques" (Nation, 1976), and in various forms this approach to looking at teaching techniques has appeared in several subsequent articles and a book that I have written. I see a connection between this analytical approach and my tendency to look for principles rather than to adopt methods of language teaching. After a couple of years of teaching on the Dip TESL, I had the opportunity to go on another aid project, this time to Thailand. As it meant that we could be near my wife's family, this was a very attractive job. During our two years in Bangkok, I worked at the Department of Technical and Economic Cooperation (DTEC). This government organisation handled relationships with aid donors and had a language institute as part of it which prepared Thai civil servants to pass the English proficiency tests needed to take up a scholarship to do academic study in universities in England, Canada, Australia, the United States, and New Zealand. There was no teacher training involved, and the program consisted of 12 week intensive English courses. It was a very successful program and the entry test to the program allowed us to predict with a reasonable degree of success the likelihood of a student passing the IELTS or TOEFL tests at the end of the course. The staff was a mixture of "foreign experts" including some Peace Corps and Canadian volunteers, and local Thai staff.

The students were all adult government employees who were generally highly motivated. If they studied well, they would have a chance of gaining a graduate degree in an overseas university, and this would enhance their promotion chances.

Some of the staff positions were funded by the British Council, some by the Australian government, and mine by the New Zealand government. I learned a great deal about curriculum design during my time at DTEC, although I did not realise that then. I visited ex-students around Thailand, and had plenty of opportunity to write. Most of the articles written at this time were strongly technique based, and usually arose out of teaching. Many were published in *English Teaching Forum*. We wanted to stay for a third year in Thailand, but when I asked the university in New Zealand for another year's leave, they quite reasonably pointed out that I had been employed by them for around 10 years and had only spent about five of those years in New Zealand.

H.V. George retired after our return from Thailand, and the new director of the English Language Institute was Graeme Kennedy. Graeme was a very capable administrator and a first-class academic. His goal was to make the English Language Institute a more integrated part of the university, and he was very successful in doing that. As a result of his efforts, all of the programs offered by the ELI grew. We offered our own MA program, we began to take doctoral students, and the number of New Zealand teachers on the Dip TESL increased and they did the same courses as the international students. The English Proficiency Program also took on more local students and eventually ran over the whole year. I was very proud of the fact that we were clearly one of the best administered departments in the university, and this is a tradition that has continued with subsequent directors. This very capable administration has been crucial to the high morale, supportive collegial atmosphere, and academic success of the School. The School has been very innovative in administrative and staff support procedures, and in the introduction of new programs. Jane Dudley who was our secretary for over forty years wrote a farewell letter which is a potted history of the school (see Appendix 8).

20.3 Ave Coxhead, Graeme & Win Kennedy, Paul

I used to say that Jane was one of only three people in the world who could read my hand-writing. I was not one of the three.

When we returned to New Zealand, I did some more study in Education. One of the large assignment papers I wrote was a review of research on second and foreign language vocabulary teaching. When I began researching for the paper, I expected to find about ten or maybe twenty relevant articles. To my surprise, I found several hundred. These, of course, included a lot of research on first language vocabulary learning and first language vocabulary size. I started building up a database of these articles which has now reached almost 5000. I turned the paper into an article, but I had some trouble getting it published because the current belief was that the deliberate decontextualised learning of vocabulary was not a permitted option in language courses. I then started writing my first book, *Teaching and Learning Vocabulary*. Like many of my books, this appeared in an in-house photocopied form long before I considered offering it for publication. In fact, now that I think back, publication was never a goal. I was most interested in gathering and sorting out the ideas and putting them into some organised form. I think the manuscript went through at least four or five internal editions before Rupert Ingram of Newbury House looked at it on a visit to New Zealand, and said he would publish it. With one or two minor exceptions, all of my early books have been written in this way. I have got interested in the subject, often because I had to teach it, researched and wrote about it so that I could organise my teaching and the students would have something to read, and eventually it appeared in a form that was suitable for publication. I find it much more satisfying and comfortable to write in this way, rather than proposing a book title and then writing to a publisher's deadline. The book was strongly research-based and had a very large bibliography. I tried to write it largely within the first 2000 words of English. This was because most of my students were not native speakers of English, and because I did not want difficult language to get in the way of the ideas.

**The United States and New Zealand**

In 1984, I was offered a position as a Fulbright scholar in residence for about seven months at Ohio University in the United States. I taught some graduate courses, including one on the teaching and learning of vocabulary, and one on teaching techniques and teaching methodology, to students who came from many different parts of the United States. Only one of my students in Athens, Ohio, Jane Tribe, was actually born there. Many of the students had been Peace Corps volunteers and had decided that they were going to take up TESOL as a profession. They were terrific students. The library at Ohio University was excellent and had copies of journals that went right back to volume one. I spent a large amount of time reading and working on the measurement of vocabulary size. The visit to the United States provided a very strong academic boost to my career. It also provided me with my first opportunity to attend the TESOL conference. It was held in New York and Andrew Cohen and I and one of my students, Chuck Sturms, shared a hotel room in the New York Hilton. Chuck and I spent most evenings wandering the streets of New York. In retrospect, this probably wasn't a wise thing to do, but we saw a lot and visited all the sights. TESOL was the first really big conference I'd ever been to, and I remember swearing to myself that I would never present at such a conference because it was like giving a paper in a railway station with people coming and going all the time. A presenter was putting their reputation on the line in teaching conditions that they would probably refuse to teach under. It was a promise to myself that I wasn't able to keep. Even though I enjoyed the TESOL conference, it was over 20 years

before I went to my next one. This wasn't a policy of avoidance, but was largely a result of the distance between New Zealand and the rest of the world.

For someone from a small, rather isolated country, it is reassuring to go to an international conference, because it helps you realise that you can do work that is as good as that done in other larger countries, and that those famous godlike scholars are just as human and fallible as the rest of us.

The conference I attended most often was the RELC seminar in Singapore. This conference is typically limited to around 600 participants and is set in a part of the world that I am very familiar with. The food in Singapore is also fantastic. This conference is small enough to allow you to easily meet everyone that you want to, and to get to a lot of the papers. Several of my articles have been published in the *RELC Journal* and other RELC publications. One of my early colleagues at the ELI, Jack Richards, the most famous of all New Zealand-born applied linguists, still does some teaching there.

**Finland**

After returning from the United States, our next chance to travel overseas was to spend a few months in Finland, at Åbo Akademi in Turku. An old friend, Håkan Ringbom, was a professor there. At this time, in 1990, my first book *Teaching and Learning Vocabulary* had just appeared. From Finland and we went on through Europe to the AILA conference in Thessaloniki and toured around Greece and Italy, and then went to Israel to meet up with Batia Laufer.

**The ELI becomes LALS**

There were now big changes in the ELI. The university had decided that there were too many small departments in the university and wanted to set up a smaller number of larger schools. Our most obvious partner was Linguistics, a small department that we already had very close relationships with. In fact, we had already approached them a few years before to see if they wanted to join with us, but at that time they saw no pressing need. It was a very successful amalgamation, and the resulting school, Linguistics and Applied Language Studies, or LALS for short, worked very well.

**Temple University Japan**

In the early 1990s, at a CLESOL conference in Wellington (CLESOL stands for "community languages and English for speakers of other languages") it was decided to set up a national TESOL organisation called TESOLANZ (the A stands for Aotearoa, the Maori name for New Zealand). I was the first interim president, and one of the smartest things I did was to arrange for the distribution of the journal *English Teaching Forum* to all of our members. This appeared four times a year and did not cost us anything. But four times a year it gave us something concrete to distribute to the members of TESOLANZ. I am sure that this was one of the important things that allowed us to quickly reach a membership of between 500 and 600 members - a very large membership for such a small country. There is a CLESOL conference held every two years, and it is very well attended.

Rod Ellis was invited as a plenary speaker to one of these conferences, and he flew into Wellington, and I drove him up to Auckland for the conference, taking him to Ohakune and Rotorua on the way. What he saw convinced him that New Zealand was the place to live, and

not long after he took up the professor's position in applied linguistics at the University of Auckland, succeeding Jack Richards.

After Rod's visit to New Zealand, I gave a distinguished lecturer seminar at Temple University Japan where Rod was teaching, and in 1994-95 we spent a year in Japan teaching courses at Temple University Japan. On reflection, I don't know how I survived. I taught 14 different courses in eight different subject areas, each course involving 14 three-hour classes. At one point I was teaching eight three-hour classes a week (six times a week and twice on Saturday). Nitha and I loved Japan and have now visited there numerous times, each visit involving teaching.

Because most classes in the graduate school at Temple University Japan are taught between 6pm and 9pm to cater for the students who are teachers, there is plenty of time during the day to get on with reading and research. I used a six-month visit in 1998 to write several chapters of *Learning Vocabulary in Another Language*.

It seems to me that a very large proportion of my publications and research are closely connected with teaching. The motivation to write several of my books, for example, *Teaching ESL/EFL Listening and Speaking*, *Teaching ESL/EFL Reading and Writing*, and *Language Curriculum Design*, came from having to teach courses on those subjects. In some cases, as for *Researching and Analysing Vocabulary*, the book was largely written before the course began. In other cases, the book grew out of the course. I clearly owe my students a great debt. My more recent books, written after retirement, did not develop in this way. They have largely been written while visiting family in Thailand, although a lot of the writing was also done in New Zealand.

Around 2000, our doctoral enrolments began to increase, partly because of Government policy to charge international PhD students local fees. Very soon, I was supervising nine PhD students. Supervising theses is more difficult than it seems to be. Firstly, there is the worry about whether the thesis will be good enough to satisfy the external examiners. Victoria University of Wellington follows the British system of PhD study where there is no required course work, and the thesis is the sole requirement. Because the supervisor is not an examiner, the student and supervisor focus on reaching a high level of quality to satisfy external examiners. Secondly, there is the need to choose a really useful topic. If a student is going to spend at least three years of their life working on this one topic, then that time should be well spent. I remember in the early 1990s, when I had finished writing *Teaching and Learning Vocabulary*, I felt that I now knew quite a lot about vocabulary, but I felt frustrated because I could not see clear avenues of future research coming from this knowledge. However, ten years later, I was more confident that I could see fruitful areas of research, but it took a long time to get here. Thirdly, it is important that the thesis is the student's thesis and not the supervisor's thesis. Supervision thus involves providing guidance when it is needed, but also allowing the student to have a go. At the end of thesis study, the candidate should be a confident, independent researcher. That is a tougher goal than producing a good thesis. Fourthly, gaining a PhD thesis should make a student more employable. This often depends on the topic of the thesis, and I found it was always worthwhile to think about how employable someone would be if they had spent three years studying this particular topic.

I am very proud of the thesis work that my students have done, and much of it has been published. In a large number of cases, their research has shown that something I previously wrote was wrong. Stuart Webb showed that different ways of learning vocabulary did not necessarily lead to different kinds of knowledge. Teresa Chung showed that technical vocabulary was far more important than I had imagined. Shin Dongkwang showed that high frequency multiword units were much more frequent than I thought. Sangrawee Donkaewbua showed that sensitive tests were not always as sensitive as they could be. It may be that a lot of my future writing will involve correcting the errors of my earlier writing.

I retired at 65 in 2009 but stayed on for one more year to be counted into the Performance-Based Research Fund (PBRF) round. By this time, almost all of my PhD students had completed their theses. I no longer reviewed articles, supervised and examined theses, taught or was involved in any administrative work.

I found at the beginning of my retirement that I was doing less work in my garden and around the house than I did before I retired. This was because I spent a lot of time doing research and writing now that I had more free time to do that. I was producing around one book a year, some of them second editions, totalling around 23 books during that time. I then resolved to do all academic work by 12 noon and keep the rest of the day free for non-academic things. I did one more semester teaching at Temple in Japan in 2013 making it around 16 visits there in 20 years.

I keep thinking that each book will be my last book because I seem to have said most things I have wanted to say. However, I enjoy writing, particularly in figuring out and organising the ideas. So, I have decided that when it becomes boring or tedious, I will stop.

I think that *What should every EFL teacher know?* is the most useful book I have written (answering questions that teachers might ask). That was written in a few weeks in Thailand. Perhaps the one that gave me the most satisfaction was *Measuring native-speaker vocabulary size* because I started that book about three times. Then, after reading an article by Marc Brysbaert and colleagues, I finally figured out a model of vocabulary growth (Chapter 7) that allowed me to tie all the parts together. My reputation in the field is largely based on *Teaching and learning vocabulary* (1990) and *Learning vocabulary in another language* (2001). Paul Meara's bibliometric studies underline the effect of these two books on the field of vocabulary studies.

I have been very fortunate in my career in that most of my teaching has been done with students who have had considerable life experience before coming back to do graduate study. I can think of very few students in my classes who were not keen to learn. They were all interested in the subject of TESL and TEFL. I got a shock when, fairly late in my career, I did undergraduate teaching and encountered students who were just there to pass the course. Teaching committed students has always been a joy, and such students inspire the teacher to do more.

Many students feel grateful to their teachers and that is always heartening. The best way they can show this gratitude is not through material gifts but through putting their own learning to good use. Teachers gain enormous pleasure from seeing the success of their students, partly because they feel that they may have played some part in that success. Imagine the feeling

when someone gains a tenured position, or publishes a really good article, or gains an award for teaching and you can say, "They were my student.”

## Chapter 21 The Roeksbutr family

My wife Kanitha is the oldest child in the Roeksbutr family. The Roeksbutr family is included in my family tree on *Ancestry*. Making that part of the tree was very interesting because there were no certificates or trees in *Ancestry* that I could draw on. Fortunately, Nitha's sister Maew had good knowledge of the various family members. As well as that, there were photos of ancestors on house shrines, and photos from weddings and funerals.

21.1 The Roeksbutr family in 1967, taken for an absent oldest sister studying in New Zealand

This picture was taken at the family home just off Phaholyotin Road, Bangkok while Kanitha was studying in New Zealand. The children are in order of age, starting with Ba (back left), Maew, Mu, Ti, Tu (in front) and Jib. This photo was my first meeting with all the family, and was sent to Kanitha studying in New Zealand in 1967.

21.2 The Roeksbutr brothers and sisters in Chiengmai

Once again, the brothers and sisters are in order of age.

Nitha's great-great-grandfather was called Mee, which is the Thai name for bear (the animal). Mee had a child called Phun, and Phun had a child called Thom (Nitha's grandfather). In the early 19th century, Thais did not use family names, and when it became necessary to have family names, in 1913 (BE 2456), King Rama 6 gave the family name Roeksbutr (Rikshaputra) to Phun and Thom (Pantri Luangranaripon). Rikshaputra means child of the bear. Thom rose to a high position in the military. Thom Roeksbutr and his wife Kamkoorn Mongkonwisut had one child, Leon (Nitha's father). Thom had children with other wives. I met all of the other children except one who became a monk. The eldest was the one who performed our wedding ceremony. Leon Roeksbutr (1910-1991) worked at the Port Authority of Thailand.

21.3 Leon Roeksbutr

His wife (Nitha's mother) was Boonlom Issarangkoon na Ayudhya (1921-1993). She had been a teacher. Her mother, Boonpring (Pring) Tedwisarn, had five children. Each one had a

different father. Boonlom's father was (Khun Damnern Wisawakarn) Leon Issarangkoon na Ayudhya. The other children were Boonplug Pliansakhun (father of La, Ji, Sim, Jarp, and Num), Somporn Yingwattana, Prajuab Worachanin, and Supot (Biak) Tedwisarn. Boonpring died while Nitha was studying in New Zealand. Somporn is Na Porn who lived with us when I was at DTEC.

21.4 Kanitha paying respect at Boonpring's ashes in 1978 at Wat Hualamphong

Although Leon Roeksbutr's family was not well off, every one of his children completed a university degree. Kanitha majored in English at Chulalongkorn University and taught at Kasetsart University. She gained a Dip TESL from Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. Maew majored in accountancy at Chulalongkorn University and worked for Siam Motors. Pa, like his father, worked in the Port authority of Thailand, in public relations. Mu gained a Bachelor's degree in science in Thailand and a Master's degree in medical physics from the University of Aberdeen. She worked in Mahidon Hospital and taught at Silapakorn University in the Nakorn Pathom campus, not far out of Bangkok. Tu majored in law at Thammasat and worked in her brother-in-law's law firm as office manager. Ti completed a degree at Kasetsart University and worked for the Forestry Service in Chiengmai. Jib became a teacher of mathematics at Nakorn Nayok Technical College.

Kanitha (Bau) was born in Nan, Siam in 1942. Siam became Thailand at the end of World War 2. The family moved to Bangkok when she was around four and they lived in Sathorn Road. They then moved to Paholyotin Road, where I first met the family. Finally, they lived at 188 Soi Chalermsook, now called Soi Rachadapisek 42, where later Maew and Bamrung's house replaced the original wooden building.

Nakorn Roeksbutr (Pa, 1944-2013) married Anya Kam-at (Gung) in 1972. After getting married, they lived with the family in Soi Chalermsook. When we came to work in Thailand in 1978, they moved into 110 Pradipat Road with us and started getting their own house built. Gung also worked at the Port Authority of Thailand. Pa died of lung cancer in 2013. Gung later sold the house in Bangkok and bought a house next to her sister outside of Bangkok.

Orn-anong Roeksbutr (Maew, born 1946) married Bamrung Tanchittiwatana on 17 June 1971. Bamrung had been the photographer at our wedding three years earlier. Bamrung was a lawyer and entrepreneur. Along with two friends they set up their own law firm, BSA Law. They had two children, Pimnetr (Miau) (born in 1974) and Bovorn (Mong) (born in 1976). Bamrung helped set up the law faculty of East Asia University and taught there. Bovorn has two children, Tonmai and Tonnam.

Wongsuda Roeksbutr (Mu, born 1949) married Tom Edwards (a fellow physicist) late in life in 2002 and went to live in Melbourne, Australia. Tom had emigrated from England to Australia with his father after his mother died. He taught physics at Swinburne University in Melbourne.

Varawut Roeskbutr (Ti, 1950-2012) married Panida Khrutkham (Toi) in 1979. They had two girls Sathawee (Pin) and Peerata (Prang). Toi was a nurse at Suandok hospital in Chiengmai and the family lived in a house near the hospital. They eventually built their own house in Laddarom in Chiengmai. Ti died of lung cancer in 2012, nursed at home by Toi and Pin and Prang. He donated his body to medical research.

21.5 Prang, Pin, Ti, and Toi in front of their house in Chiengmai

Suttilak Roeksbutr (Tu, born 1956) married Tanit Dangsri (Tanit) in 1980. They had two daughters, Thanisa (Som, born 1984) and Tuangporn (Wan, born 1986).

21.6 Tu and Thanid wedding (Na Juab, Nor, Maew, Bamrung; Middle: Mu, Jib, Boonlom (Mother), Bovorn, Ti, Leon (Father); Front: Thanid, Miau, Tu)

21.7 Wan and Som

Jongrak Roeksbutr (Jib, born 1958) married Aroonniwat Changyai (Chang) in 1981. Chang was in the army, rising to the rank of General before retiring. They built a house in Nakorn Nayok.

21.8 Chang and Jib's wedding in 1981 (Bamrung, Ti, Gung, Pa, Thanid, Tu, Nor, Mu, Maew; In front Bovorn, Chang, Jib, Miau)

The family remain close to each other. On our annual visit to Thailand everyone gets together to play cards and to eat. Miau organizes a family holiday, with dogs, and the card playing and eating continue.

We get to Melbourne every year, usually accompanied by Tu and Wan and Som to see Mu and Tom, as Mu is unlikely to do any more travelling.

## Chapter 22 Retirement

I retired when I was 65 (4 July 2009, my independence day), largely because I was financially better off retired, and I could be free of the less attractive jobs of university life, which for me were assessing and administration. I also had plenty of book and research projects that I wanted to get on with. I had suggested a deal to the Vice-chancellor for research Neil Quigley, that if he gave us one more staff member, we could give him nine more PhD students. Instead, because a performance-based research funding round was coming up, he wanted me to stay on for another year. So, I stayed until 2010.

22.1 2010 Farewell party from LALS – Graeme Kennedy, Paul, Batia Laufer, Paul Warren, Ave Coxhead

While I was working in Thailand in 1977-1978, I taught myself to swim. Around 2010, I took up swimming at the urging of a chiropractor I went to. I started at Johnsonville Pool. I found I quickly improved in the number of lengths I did, and I was soon swimming one kilometre (40 lengths) each time. I moved to Karori Pool and Nitha and Nat joined me, doing aqua-jogging, and we go three times a week except during school holidays. It did not help me lose weight, but I felt fitter and did not gain weight. I am sure that this regular demanding exercise kept me going. On coming home from swimming, I was hungry and tended to sleep for an hour or so. In Thailand, Miau found a swimming pool not too far from the house, and when in Thailand, I cycled there in the afternoon to swim. Also, on our visits to Chiengmai, I regularly swam in the pool near Toi's house where we stayed. I found that swimming helped me work out ideas in my writing. It was a bit like Paul Meara taking a walk on the beach near his university to find the answer to research problems.

When covid came, I expanded an existing pastime, taking care of the bush on our land. I had removed the wandering willie (tradescantia) from our land with the help of my neighbour Mhairi McKenzie, but my neighbours' (Reiner Huber, Andrew Smith) sections of bush were covered with it. I started clearing it, piling it up to compost, and making paths. Within a few months, I had cleared the bush of wandering willie right down to Wilton Road. The secondary growth of ngaio, punga, rangiora, wineberry, hoheria, five finger and karaka from seeds carried by pigeons started growing back almost immediately, helped by the protection from wind in the gully and plenty of rain. Within two years of doing the weeding, there were

new trees that were now taller than me. Four years after the weeding, they were twice as tall as me. I made paths and eventually a bridge from Ross's old deck timber. I made several benches to sit on. It was demanding but very satisfying work. It took about a year and a half for all the wandering willie in two large piles to become compost. I guess there was around two tons of weed. I carried the compost in large paint buckets through the bush and up the steps to the vegetable garden. I tried using the wheelbarrow for part of the journey, but eventually it seemed simpler and easier just to carry a couple of buckets each time. I carried up ten loads on the first day, seven on the next and eventually settled on three loads (six buckets) each day. It took a bit more than a month to carry it all up. This had a strikingly positive effect on the strength of my knees. I used to have to prop myself up against the wall to put on my pants, but now I could easily balance on one leg. The compost turned out to be a little bit too acidic but adding some lime made a great difference. Every week I would go over a different part of the bush looking for any wandering willie bits that were trying to regrow. There was always some but not very much, about enough each time to half-fill a plastic bread bag.

There were several sycamore and wild cherry trees in the bush, and Ross and I cut them down and I poisoned the stumps. The trees made good firewood. They were the wood that warms you three times – once when it is cut down and cut into pieces, once when it is carried up through the bush, and finally once when it is burned. It was only from 2023 that I needed to buy firewood.

In one or two places the heavy rain made some paths collapse, but with the help of steel waratahs, I rebuilt them. Every so often, I consider what is the worst part of the tracks and then concentrate on improving that.

The house at 35 Warwick Street is the original Roger Walker house with no additions. In a similar way, I consider what is the part of the house most in need of improvement and get work done on that, usually by my nephew Ross. The biggest improvements were lining the bathroom, which just had painted concrete blocks, redoing the north wall of the study which had a leak from the round window, and lining the ceiling of the entranceway to stop mould. All done by Ross. In January 2003, when the kitchen and bathroom were being remodelled by Wellington Kitchen and Bathroom, I built the shed. I built the shed largely to find out how to do it. I drew on Ross and Peter for advice, and I should have consulted them a bit more. It was built over the summer, and I was teaching, but I took every Monday off and worked on the building for three days each week. The bench and drawers in the shed are from our kitchen.

The land at 37 Warwick Street was bought around 1980 and the house was built in 1984. I think Ross may have been the first occupant. A conservatory and deck were added in 1986, and in 1998 the bathroom and bedroom under the house were added by Peter Geraghty. The kitchen and laundry were added in 2009 by Tony Overton's men, and the redoing of the entrance way in 2016, also by Tony Overton (Rob Nicholas). All extensions were designed and supervised by Roger Walker. Appendix 9 has a brief article about 37 Warwick Street.


22.2 Ross Bryers

The guest house at 35 Warwick Street was built in 1992. The bedroom was added in 2000-2001. The height of the bathroom roof was increased when the entranceway at 37 was done in 2016 and the bathroom exterior re-cladded. The guest house had double-glazing in 2023, and in 2024, Ross replaced the decking timber on the small deck of the guest house.

Although I had retired, I still taught occasionally at TUJ in Japan and went to conferences. In 2002, I was invited back to Abo Akademi, in Abo (Turku), Finland. Once again, kindly invited by Hakan Ringbom. We stayed in the same apartment as in 1990. This time Prahm was not with us. The contrast between Turku in 1990 and 2002 was like a generation change. The Finns had become Europeans. Whereas in 1990 no-one spoke English in super-markets or shops, now the staff wore badges indicating what languages they spoke. We took the overnight ferry to Stockholm. The contrast between that and our previous visit at the end of winter was remarkable. Stockholm in spring and summer is a very different place from Stockholm in winter.

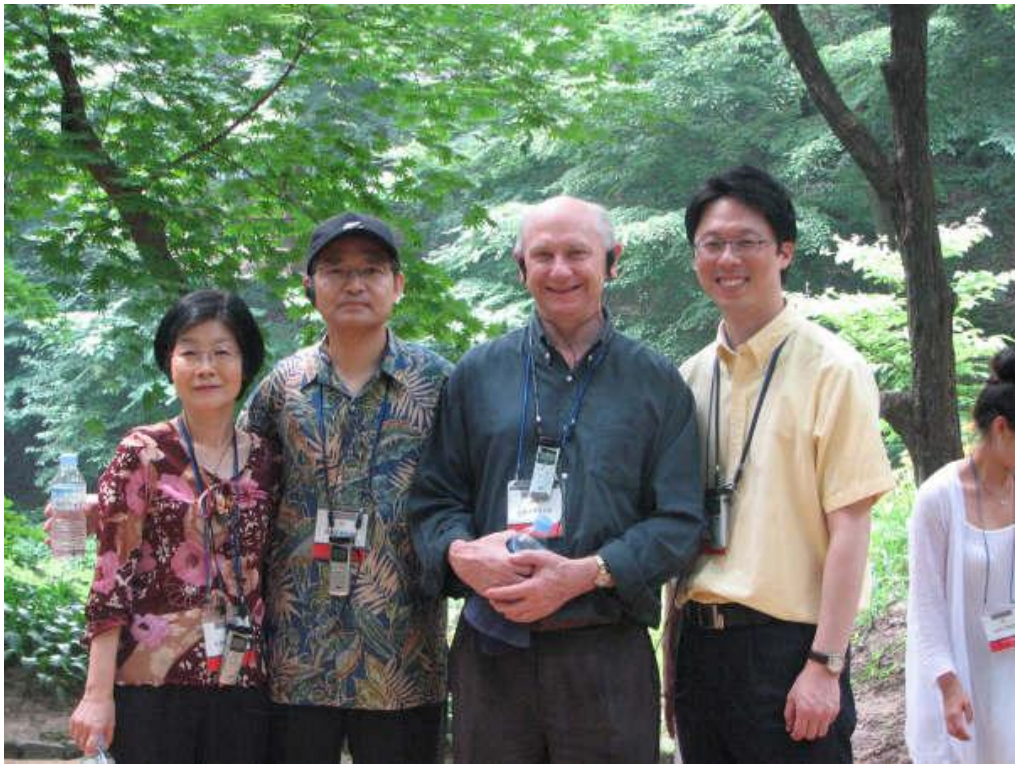
While we were in Turku, I caught a bad cold. I consulted a nurse and was prescribed some antibiotics. After about three days of taking them, I went to the chemist and said I felt much worse taking the medicine. He advised me to keep taking it. It was as if a switch had been turned off inside me. I completely lacked any motivation. I had to force myself to eat and do things. This persisted for a few weeks, and then when I woke up one morning, I knew I was better again. It was a very unsettling experience, and it may have given me a very small taste of what it is like to live with depression.

We went to St Petersburg for three days with a busload of drunken Finns, and Peter Michelson and Judith Aplon who were in the apartment next to us, and Jim Scarry, all briefly attached to Abo Akademi like us. On the trip we were asked if we wanted to change money (Euros to Roubles). Everyone shouted yes. The bus pulled into a side street and a man with a battered carry bag got on and went through the bus exchanging money. No forms, no signatures. The trip continued. Who wants to go to the official duty free shop? No. Who wants to buy duty free goods? Yes. The bus pulled into a side street, two cars pulled up behind us, the boots flew open and there were the duty free goods for sale. We went to the

Hermitage, the Russian circus, various churches and a cemetery not too far from the tourist hotel we were in, by the Neva River.

All trips beyond Australia usually involve a stay in Thailand. Miau built a guest room with shower and toilet above her car parking area for us. It is just the right size for us and very comfortable. It is very light and airy with views of trees through the windows. Because we are at the end of the soi, there is very little traffic. When we travel there, we can do so with an empty suitcase because we have clothing and everything we need there. We visit Thailand every year, around July-August (the fruit season). The sisters genuinely enjoy being with each other, talking and playing cards. I work on books, watch DVDs, and eat much more than I should.

Around the time of my retirement, I was approached by K. C. Kang through an ex-student of mine, Hwang Kyongho, to consider the publication of a course book called *4000 Essential Words*. KC owned Compass Publishing in Seoul, Korea, and had a good sense for what teachers and learners wanted. Compass also published *What should every EFL Teacher Know?* and a series of books on reading for speed and fluency. We visited KC in Korea, as well as going to several conferences in Korea.



22.3 Paul with ex-students in Korea (Teresa, Patrick (Hwang), Dongkwang)

I took KC on a tour of the North Island including my hometown of Ohakune and a visit to my cousin Malcolm’s farm during lambing. KC sold Compass and later started a new company, Seed Learning, run by him, then his daughter Su and now his son, Jun. Seed has also published several series of books with me.

22.4 KC with friend

With KC's help, Laurence Anthony came from Japan to New Zealand to program the Picture Vocabulary Size Test. We went on a pie tour. That involved travelling around the North Island tracking down winners of the annual pie competition and trying the pies. That work continued during the day and at night Laurence did programming. Laurence and I have had several very productive collaborations over the years, including AntWordProfiler, the Picture Vocabulary Size Test (now web-based), WordFamilyFinder, WordAffixTrainer, and WordStemTrainer. All are freely available.

In 2013, having retired and approaching seventy years old, I thought about my bucket list. We had largely tired of travelling, but I really wanted to see Prague and wanted to see as many of Pieter Breugel the elder and Bosch's paintings as I could. At the end of a semester that I was teaching at TUJ (my last semester there), we travelled to Europe. We went to Belgium to stay with Dote (a university friend of Nitha's) at La Hulpe, a very small village just on the edge of the site of the battle of Waterloo. She would drive us to the station, and we would travel into Brussels to look around and would return by train each day to be picked up by her again. One day, we made a day trip to Amsterdam to visit Father Bolsius who we knew from Indonesia. That day trip was an adventure in itself. In Belgium, the elderly can travel anywhere by train in Belgium for just five Euros, citizen or not. The ticket clerk arranged a return ticket to Amsterdam for us using our $5 allowance to get us to the border and then the regular fare in the Netherlands. Because we had two tickets for the two parts of the journey, I mistakenly thought we had to get off the train at the border and then catch another train. So, we did that, shivering in the cold on a largely deserted platform waiting for the next train. When on that train I realized my mistake, and we had a faster and more comfortable return trip. While in Belgium we also stayed in Bruges and Antwerp, stopping off in Ghent on the way to Bruges to see Bosch's *Christ carrying the cross* in Ghent. We stayed in Vienna (the Kunsthistorisches Museum has a whole room of Breugels including *Hunters in the snow*), Prague, and Munich with Karl and Jiri who took us to see Salzberg on a day trip. We stayed in Paris, this time not in Montmartre, but near Tuileries garden. There are some places in the world that have a magic to them. For me, Paris is one of those places. Others are Venice, Koya-san, Thailand and, in the past, Bali. The magic is partly a feeling of history but largely a feeling of difference and of things happening that go beyond the expected.

At the end of 2013, the ever-supportive Averil Coxhead organised a conference called Vocab@Vic. It was great. People came from all over and that year for Christmas we had Rob

Waring, Marlisse Horst, Tom Cobb, Batia Laufer, and Norbert and Diane Schmitt around for Christmas dinner.

22.5 Vocab@Christmas at 35 Warwick Street

The Vocab@ conferences have continued in various places about every two or three years with a very enjoyable one in Wellington again in 2023. Geoff Pinchbeck helped me rebuild the V-block wall by our lawn before attending the conference.

22.6 Laurence Anthony, Paul, Stuart Webb 2023

In 2016, I was invited to visit the Foreign Service Institute in Virginia which trains diplomats and Peace Corps volunteers in a wide range of languages. They had bought a copy of my *What should every EFL Teacher Know?* book for each one of their 400 staff. I was happy to accept because I was great admirer of the work of Paul Pimsleur and Earl Stevick who had worked there, although I had never met them. They asked me how much I wanted. I worked out the airfares for Nitha and me, accommodation for a ten day holiday there and told them US$10,000. They agreed without a murmur and so we were off. It was not however quite as

simple as that. In my battle to the death with the computer to fill out the entry application to the US, I had made a mistake with my birthdate. At the airport, they noted the discrepancy and said I had to apply again. Fortunately, Grant Bryers who was working in airport security had run us there and we were very early. I got on the computer and managed to get an acceptable entry permit before the plane was due to leave. The people at the Foreign Service Institute were very hospitable. I gave a lecture to a large group and met with several different groups over two days, talking about curriculum design, vocabulary, and language teaching methodology. We had lunch with a large group at a restaurant beside the Potomac River. We did two circuits of the bus tour of Washington D.C. We hired a car and toured Virginia. On the first night, we stayed in Charlottesville, not far from the University of Virginia. We walked out of the hotel to a nearby restaurant. By the time we finished our meal, it was dark and had begun to rain. We decided to run to the hotel. We started running, unfortunately in a direction away from the hotel toward a now deserted set of shops. We were wet, cold and lost. Fortunately, there was a shopkeeper just closing up who directed us back to the hotel. As we walked in, drenched, the guy behind the desk looked at us. Don't say a word, I said. He smiled and said I won't say a word.

We decided against moving to a different hotel each night, so we stayed in Fredericksburg for three or four nights, and made day trips to nearby places, largely the sites of civil war battles. There was something wrong with the curtain in our room, but we figured that if we told them we would have to move to a different room, so we kept quiet. We visited Washington's house and Jefferson's house.

From Washington, we flew to Toronto and took a bus to London, Ontario to see Stuart Webb and family.

Around 2014, I started to become interested in family history largely through transcribing and editing my grandmother's autobiography, *My Life*. I had always wondered who my grandfather on my father's side was, so in 2017, I searched for my father's birth registration in the Internal Affairs database but could not find it. I mentioned this to Trevor Cobeldick, who was married to a Spence cousin on my mother's side who was part of a genealogy group and was skilled at searching. Within a couple of days, he had found the birth registration. The problem had been that my father's family name, Munro, had been misspelt as Monro. When I looked at the birth registration, I was very surprised, because all his life my father had two first names, Lawrence Watty, but on the birth certificate there were three – Lawrence Watty Nusworth. Searching for Nusworth in *Papers Past* did not reveal anything. So, I joined Ancestry.com and had my DNA tested. Immediately, I saw several shared matches with people named Unsworth. Through *Ancestry*, I contacted Les Unsworth (great grandson of Walter Nowell Unsworth's eldest brother named John James Unsworth) and Sharon Tunbridge (granddaughter of Walter Nowell's daughter Ivy) and they referred me to Edna Bruce (nee Dally – daughter of Walter Nowell's daughter, Rita), who they said was writing a family history of the Unsworths. Edna contacted me and was very welcoming. She then sent me some of the chapters she had written, as well as some photographs of Walter Nowell. I sent her what I had written about my father along with photographs. Edna then put me in contact with Helen Unsworth (daughter of Walter Nowell's son Allan and the closest Unsworth DNA match to me on *Ancestry*) who arranged a lunch in Tauranga for family members to get together on the 16th of September 2018.

Helen wrote the following. “In mid-2018, Sharon Tunbridge received a message in her emails from *Ancestry*, from Paul Nation, who lived in Wellington. Her first thought on reading it was “Oops, someone’s jumped the fence” and referred Paul on to Edna Bruce.

“Excerpt from Edna’s email response to Paul, dated June 24, 2018:

*“Hi, Paul. My name is Edna Bruce and I am one of Walter Nowell Unsworth’s granddaughters. I live in Tauranga and I’m 72 years old. My sister, Cynthia Macdonald, also lives in Tauranga. It sounds like your Dad and my Mum were half-siblings! We all knew that our grandfather was a bit of a womaniser, so I guess it was inevitable that someone should surface eventually. We are happy to embrace you as part of our “whanau” – to be honest I’m quite excited to think we have a cousin we didn’t know about! (...) I have an article on Walter Nowell I can flick through to you if you can confirm that this email has reached you. (...) In the meantime, I’ll sign off and await your response. Cheers, Edna*

“This excerpt from Edna's email on hearing about Paul and his father Lawrence represents many of the Unsworth cousins’ responses. While it was amazing news, it wasn’t too surprising, as the family talked about Walter Nowell (Walter) being a “womaniser”. However, there was sadness that none of Lawrence’s half siblings were alive to know of his birth and his life (Bryan was the last of the siblings to die, on 1 January 2018). Our family was very taken back that he had two women pregnant at the same time, with Sarah Ann giving birth only three weeks after Bessie, and that both were living in the small town of Levin without the word getting out of who the father was of Sarah Ann’s baby. The estimated population in Levin in 1900 was 2,873. It got some of the family thinking that maybe Bessie’s father heard about the other pregnancy and therefore possibly the reason why he threatened Walter with a shotgun, insisting that Walter marry his daughter two months before her baby was born.”

I had several meetings with some of my Unsworth cousins, at The Oak Tree – a buffet restaurant in Tauranga. Helen and I started work on getting Edna’s book into shape so that we could get it printed. I put all the chapters together along with one I wrote on my father and photocopied a copy for Edna to have a look at. She was thrilled to see it as a whole book. Helen began the painstaking job of checking the facts, filling in gaps, gathering photographs and getting family members to check what had been written. It is now close to being ready.


22.7 Val (Unsworth), Paul, Helen Unsworth, Nitha in Tauranga 2018

My success with finding my grandfather pushed me to fill the other gap - my great-grandfather – the father of my grandmother Sarah Ann Virgo (2). This was much more difficult and over several years I tried all sorts of ways to narrow the field. My first choice was Charles Frederick Mitchell because of DNA links and circumstantial evidence. But the links did not make sense because they came through only one of Mitchell's children and the links should have involved all of them. Eventually, I worked out that the link was not through Mitchell's son, Charles Richard Lewis Mitchell, but through C. R. L. Mitchell's wife who was the daughter of Robert Cock who was my great grandfather. Very soon after, I worked out that Robert Cock had previously made another Virgo daughter pregnant. I am sure my grandmother never knew who her father was, and my father never knew who his father was. I am sure that my grandmother would be horrified to learn that her secret was no longer a secret. Fortunately, revealing the secret brought several cousins together and has led to the marking and restoration of several family graves and the writing of this history. The work on ancestry was fascinating, but it is not of much interest to other members of the family. Talking about it is much like talking endlessly about your own children – of great interest to you but not of great interest to other parents. The ancestry work, however, has been very satisfying. In many ways it is solving a puzzle, but a puzzle where the parts are known to you in various degrees of familiarity. Now that it is all on the *Ancestry* program and written up in this book and shared with other wider family members, it will be around for others in the family to consult and expand as they see fit.

Around 2017, after a couple of climate related disasters in New Zealand, I thought about what I would take from our house if we had one minute to evacuate. Passports, bank cards etc were all replaceable, so they were not important. I had plenty of back-ups for my computer

including a back-up at Ross's place, so that was not important, though I would probably still take my cell phone and computer because of the work involved in replacing the apps and programs on them. Top of my list of things to take were photographs and original art works. The photograph albums were too bulky to carry, so I decided to scan every photo I had. I started using my flat-bed scanner and calculated it would take several years. I bought a self-feeding scanner from Amazon, and working only a couple of hours each day, within a week I had scanned all my photos. Giving a good filename for each scanned photo was more time-consuming, but that was a process I could take my time on. Having scanned all my photos, the scanner is of no further use to me, so I have been lending it to various people. Scanning is like playing a DVD someone has lent you. It keeps getting put off. However, around five people have borrowed and used it so far, although that is over a period of around eight years which gives an indication of how long people hang on to it. By making them feel guilty about it, I figure I am helping them get on with it and preserve their memories. Now that our photos are scanned, I find we look at them more often, and they are available to send to others, put in books, and upload to *Ancestry.*

The original artworks include batik paintings from Java, a couple of Balinese paintings, a photo of the desert road in Art Deco style made by Murielle Demecheleer for my birthday, and a couple of wood carvings.

In 2019, about a month late, Nitha and I celebrated our fiftieth wedding anniversary, hosted by Steve and Julie and strongly supported by the Ohakune Nations. Nieces and nephews attended along with some longtime Ohakune friends, Ken and Merrilyn George, Graham and Janie Dixon, Bill TeKaru, and Brian and Loreta Eades. It was a great relaxed day. It was typical of any visit we make to Ohakune. The family are always generous, thoughtful and supportive. A visit to Ohakune is always like going home.

I have maintained contact with some of my old colleagues. John Read, who I have known since Indonesia days, and I remain in contact, usually including a boxing day lunch. Laurie Bauer and I still do some work together on word parts. Ave Coxhead keeps an eye on me. Stuart Webb and I stay in regular contact, and I catch up with Norbert Schmitt through Zoom each year. Irina Elgort and I work on the occasional project.


22.7 Family at our 50th wedding anniversary

22.8 50th cupcakes with pictures

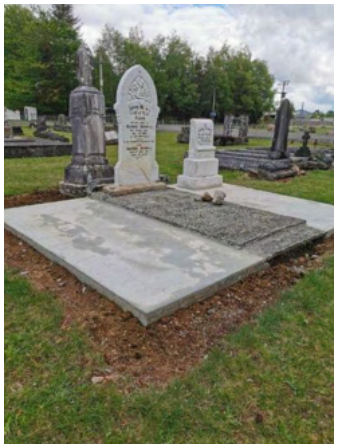
22.9 Slugs courtesy of Julie

2023 was a special year for Tina, filling a life-long dream to visit the home of the king, Elvis.


22.10 Tina and school-buddy Maureen living the life

In 2023, I restored the Nation, Ashwell, Mahony and Waring graves in Raetihi cemetery, with support from my cousins. The restorations were very successful. The old Ashwell and Nation graves looked spectacular. The grave of Ruth and James Leighton Ashwell had previously been unmarked.

22.11 Before



22.12 After

Inspired by this, Marie-ann Quinn (nee Ashwell) organized a reunion in early 2024 which was attended by 42 Ashwell descendants. Once again, Ohakune hospitality made the day.

Prahm tracked down William Weir's grave in Karori cemetery. I was resident, fellow, deputy warden and acting warden in Weir House for four years, and when not a resident, on the Weir House Council for several years, and so considered it would be appropriate to tidy up and maintain the grave of the benefactor of Weir House. He never married. It was in very good condition and took just a couple of hours to clear and plant with some renga-renga.

Our retired life is comfortably monotonous. There is a lot to be said for predictable monotony. A typical day involves staying in bed in the morning doing reading and writing. All my writing is done in bed. On Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings there is swimming and aqua-jogging for an hour. The afternoons are for work on the section. We don't go out much beyond the supermarkets, mainly to the Thai temple in Newlands, and occasionally the Temple in Stokes Valley. We can't be bothered eating out. We meet up with a few friends for a meal at their place or ours. I have a few elderly friends I look out for, though they are rapidly disappearing. I kept John Jensen in Te Hopai supplied with Thai nam jim made by Nitha to make his vegan meals tasty. I helped Yu-Lina with Ken, having helped her with Jenny in her last months. We meet up with Mhairi, our ex-neighbour, every few weeks or so for a meal around Waikanae. We exchange visits with my newly discovered cousins, Wilf and Lyndal (an ex-Nightingale) Layburn, Mary (Spence) and Trevor Cobeldick, and the Unsworths.

22.13 The Nation family 2023

If I could carry five-seconds memory of my present life to my next life, what would those five-seconds be? Like my sister Betty, I have no trouble identifying those five seconds. Well before I retired, I came home from work and stood on our back steps. Nitha was weeding near the cribwall by the bottom lawn. We both smiled at each other and at that moment it was as if we were one person, not two. When she came in, she said "I am always glad to see you come home." She felt it too. There is another five-second moment, this time in Indonesia. I had just come home from the hospital where I had been as Prahm was born. I was tired because Prahm was not born until about seventeen hours after Nitha went into labour. As I lay on our bed, Prahm's face was clearly in my memory, and I marvelled at the perfection of his features. There was another notable pleasing memory, but this was much longer than five seconds. I had just been promoted to Associate Professor. For the next month, I felt a kind of pleasant glow. I felt the promotion as a substantial achievement. Such promotions were difficult to get and although I felt I deserved it, getting it was very pleasing.

Ross Bryers keeps an eye on us and is always willing to help. Grant makes sure we get to family funerals. We eat with Tina and Prahm once a week, and Tina keeps us supplied with cookies and runs me to dental appointments. It is great having them living next door.

## Appendixes

### Appendix 1: Indecent assault hearing (Hawkes Bay Herald 6 Jan 1881)

INDECENT ASSAULT. David Power was indicted for indecently assaulting Sarah Ann Virgo on January the 1st, at Te Aute. The prisoner pleaded not guilty. Mr Cotterill appeared for the prosecution and Mr Lee for the defence. Mr Sinden was chosen foreman of the jury. Sarah Ann Virgo deposed that on the day in question she was living at Te Aute with her step-father, Mr Thomas Tucker, about a mile and a half from the township. The nearest house was about half a mile away. On January the 1st her step-father left the house just as it was getting dusk. She was in the house with her step-sister, Emily Tucker. The prisoner came to the house after her step-father had left and knocked. Witness's step-sister opened the door. The prisoner stood inside the doorway, and she told him to go out as she did not want him there. After a pause he said he would take a seat whether he was wanted or not. He then came in and took a seat. He wanted witness to sing, but she would not. He then wanted her to go and hear him play the piano at the hotel, but she refused. She then went with her stepsister to the station, asking the prisoner to come out of the house, which he did, witness locking the door. She went up in the direction of Mr Cable's house, but met him on the road. The prisoner used bad language to her on the road up. When they met Cable, they turned back and went home, the prisoner going in the direction of the hotel. On returning home she went to bed. Her step-sister went to bed with her. Between nine and ten o'clock the prisoner returned and broke the door open. She saw him come in. He came straight up to witness's bed. Witness jumped out to wake her brother up. Her brother was 11 years old. While she went to wake him, the prisoner put out the candle. He then assaulted her. She had a struggle with him, and pushed him down to the fireplace. He wanted her to say good-bye, and shake hands with him, but she would not. The prisoner then went away. Her father came home about 10 o'clock, and she then made a complaint to him. By Mr Lee: Witness did not say at Waipawa that she sat on the bed after her return. She might have done so while she was sewing. After starting for Cable's, she did not make any appointment to meet the prisoner later on in the evening. She had never been intimate with the prisoner. Witness was 14 years old last December. Her step-father kept her. She did not leave Te Aute, because they kept a disorderly house. Her mother left home, but she never heard that she went away with any man. She could not sing, nor had ever gone to the hotel to try to sing. Emily Tucker, aged 8 years, deposed that on January 1 she was living at Te Aute with her father. He went out that evening, leaving her and her sister. After her father went away the prisoner came into the house. He wanted them to go to the hotel, but they only went as far as the railway station. They met her brother on the road, and the prisoner went on ahead and they met Mr Cable, when they turned home again and went to bed. Between 9 and 10 o'clock the prisoner broke the door open, came in, walked straight up to the bed and put the light out. Her sister and prisoner had a struggle, and he then went away again. By Mr Lee: Witness had been talking with her sister about the case. The prisoner told her father his name was David Power. Witness had often been to the Te Aute Hotel with her sister. She had never seen the prisoner in the house before that night. They had been in the house about an hour before the prisoner returned a second time. It was moonlight that night.

By the Court: When the prisoner came in a second time the prosecutrix had her clothes on. Thomas Tucker deposed that on the evening in question he went out of the house a little after 7 o'clock, leaving the two girls. He returned about 10 o'clock, when the elder girl made a complaint to him. He found the door had been broken open. On the Monday morning, the children pointed the prisoner out to him. By Mr Lee: Witness worked for his living. The reason he left Te Aute was because he could not get any work. He never heard any complaint about his house. Constable Strudwick deposed that from information received on January the 3rd he went in search of the prisoner, and found him in Waipawa, He then seemed excited, and said to witness, "I want to see you." Witness then said, "Yes, and I want to see you." He took the prisoner to Tucker, who identified him as being the man his daughters had pointed out. When charged the prisoner made a remark reflecting on the girl's character. By Mr Lee: Witness had heard reflections passed on the girl's character in the district. This closed the case for the Crown. Patrick Moroney, hotelkeeper at Paki Paki, deposed that the Tucker family bore a bad reputation. He had frequently heard remarks to that effect passed during the last two years. His Honor said a great responsibility rested upon the jury in this case, for if the prisoner was found guilty of the offence, he was liable to a long term of imprisonment and a flogging besides. All they had to do was to say whether the alleged crime had been proved to their satisfaction. The evidence of the girl Tucker was diametrically opposed to that of her step-sister and her own evidence at Waipawa. She also said that the night on which the offence was supposed to have been committed was moonlight, whereas the almanac showed that it was not so. There were other grave discrepancies in the evidence. They would have to look at the probabilities of the case. It seemed unlikely that an utter stranger would enter the house and behave as he did without some encouragement. After retiring for five minutes the jury returned a verdict of not guilty. The jury were then thanked for their services, and the Court rose.

**Appendix 2: Tucker inquest Thursday 5 May 1892**

An inquest on the body of THOMAS TUCKER, found drowned on Thursday morning [5 May 1892], held the same evening in the BEACONSFIELD HOTEL, before S. JOHNSON, Esq., J.P., CORONER. CONSTABLE SIDDELS conducted the enquiry.

The following jury were sworn in —Messrs ROBINSON (foreman), FITZGERALD, HULL, PIKE, SMITH and TOWERS. The jury retired to view the body, which was lying at the house lately occupied by deceased. On their return Constable Siddels called -

WILLIAM TUCKER, who deposed that he was a laborer residing at Kopua. Deceased was his father. Last saw his father on Tuesday night. The deceased was then in good health. His age was 65. He had not been complaining of ill-health. His eyesight was weak. He followed the occupation of firewood splitter, but had lately been out of work. He depended on witness for support. Witness gave him 7 shillings on Tuesday night.

To the foreman: Deceased could see well enough for all ordinary purposes, except reading. Had also been receiving support from his daughter, as well as from him (witness).

To the Coroner: Deceased had no money when witness gave him the 7 shillings on Tuesday.

Mrs DAVIES deposed that she was the wife of JOHN CHARLES DAVIES, licensee of the MAKOTUKU HOTEL. Last saw deceased alive between 8 and 10 on Wednesday night. He was then leaving for home. He had come down at about 11 in the morning, and had been assisting Mr DAVIES in the blacksmith shop all the day. They stopped work between 4 and 5. He had his dinner in the hotel. Witness did not know where deceased had his tea. Deceased went away after work, and returned during the evening. Witness served him with two glasses of beer, one after work at about 4 o'clock, and one after tea. Did not know if he had any other drinks. Deceased was spending his time playing bagatelle, and reading the paper. Saw him when he left, and wished him goodnight. He was quite capable of walking home. Had he not been so, someone would have accompanied him. On former occasions when he seemed weak, witness' son or husband had accompanied him. He seemed weakly, and in ill-health, and the beer might have affected him more than ordinarily. Even when deceased was under the influence of liquor it did not seem to affect his legs. Deceased only spent 6 ... (illegible) in the house.

To the Coroner: Deceased used to take a glass of beer now and again.

To the foreman: Deceased ate his dinner, and took a cup of tea.

To a juror: The night was clear, and deceased could easily see the road.

ALFRED HUNT deposed that he was a laborer and son of the former witness. Last saw deceased alive in the MAKOTUKU HOTEL at about 9.20 last night. Witness and deceased were playing together for drinks. Witness lost and paid for the drinks, and supplied them himself. Deceased drank a medium glass of beer. Witness had been in his company since a few minutes past 8, and he had in that time one other drink besides the one mentioned above.

Deceased took a long beer. Witness served and deceased paid for the drink. Witness went to bed at about 9.20, and left deceased in the bar. Did not consider him the worse for liquor. Had twice accompanied deceased home. Saw no one serve in the bar except Mrs DAVIES.

To the Coroner: Would term deceased a moderate drinker. Have worked with him for 8 months, and would not call him a 'hard case.'

To a juryman: Deceased said he would go home for his tea. Returned because his house was too lonely. Could not say whether he had had any tea.

To the Constable: Deceased was able to play bagatelle, and was not drunk. Witness had only had one drink himself that evening.

JOHN CHARLES DAVIES deposed he was the licensee of the MAKOTUKU HOTEL. Last saw deceased alive at about 9.20 on Wednesday night. He had been assisting in the blacksmith's shop during the day. During the evening witness saw him in the bar, but supplied him with no liquor. Saw him leave the hotel. Deceased was not drunk, but quite capable of walking home. The evening was bright. Had known deceased to be under the influence of drink, but on those occasions someone always accompanied him home. Had done so once himself.

To the coroner: Deceased was fond of beer, but witness would not term him an habitual drunkard.

To the foreman: Deceased was merely holding some iron of long length for him while he punched holes in it.

DAVID H. SIDEY deposed that he was a sheep farmer residing at MAKOTUKU; Knew deceased by sight. Last saw him alive between 9.30 and 10 on Wednesday night on the road near the district school. Deceased was walking towards NORSEWOOD. Witness was on horseback, and rode past him in the same direction. Said good evening to him and deceased replied. He seemed to be walking alright, but stepped aside as witness passed him. Did not seem to be drunk. Witness had called at the hotel to see Mr DAVIES about some work. Stood aside to let deceased go out through the door. Earlier in the evening (directly after tea), calling in to hurry up the aforementioned work saw deceased served with a glass of beer by a young lady. Did not know her name. Deceased when walking home went along pretty briskly and seemed to be carrying a white paper bag under his left arm.

PARNELL CROSS deposed that he was a commission agent residing at MAKOTUKU. Last saw deceased alive on Wednesday night a little before 10. Saw him leave the hotel and go along the road towards his home. He seemed to be sober. Saw him, in the bar a few minutes before this, but had not been in his company.

To the Coroner: Was not near deceased but thought he was sober. Had he been much under the influence of drink witness would have noticed it.

JACOB SCHAARE deposed that he was a farmer residing at MAKOTUKU. That morning at about 9 witness was returning with an empty dray from the railway station. He was sitting on the dray, and near Mr HULL's he noticed a little dog opposite, a few yards from him and close to Mr GASSON's fence. Wondered what the dog was doing there. Moved a few paces and then saw deceased lying in the ditch, face downwards. The head was partly submerged, the mouth and nostrils being completely under water. His hat was on his head. Under his legs was a white paper bag, bound with string, but empty. The hands were close together under the stomach. Called to Mrs HULL, who came across with her daughter. They could not assist in removing deceased, so witness lifted his head out of the water. He was cold and rigid and his face partly discolored. Others then came but nothing further was done to the deceased The police were then communicated with.

To the Coroner: Had known deceased well. Did not consider him temperate.

JAMES SIDDELS deposed he was constable stationed at ORMONDVILLE. From information received he proceeded that morning to the MAKOTUKU-NORSEWOOD road, and saw the body of deceased lying in the ditch with the head out of water. Took possession of the body and removed it to the house of deceased. Under his legs was a paper which had evidently been a parcel. Searched the body and found the sum of 2s 6d, and a pocket knife. From inquiries found out that the deceased had spent 2s on groceries.

To the Coroner: Had known the deceased for 7 years, and always regarded him as a weak, sickly man, fond of drink when obtainable, and quietly and orderly in his behaviour. Would think that a comparatively small amount of drink would affect deceased. Would not call him a loafer or a habitual drunkard. Was always willing to work.

W. TUCKER, recalled stated that his father, the deceased, possessed half an acre of land and the cottage upon it. He owned no other property.

To a juryman: Was not aware of deceased being subject to fits of any kind.

This concluded the evidence.

The Coroner addressed the jury, who retired for about half an hour, and returned the following verdict: That the deceased, THOMAS TUCKER, was found drowned in a few inches of water, and that he fell into the water while under the influence of drink.

## Appendix 3: W.C. Nation's memoirs

The original version of these memoirs are in a hand-written school exercise book now in the possession of Pam Rakena. They were written in 1921, see page 8 of this document. A pdf of the hand-written copy can be found on my web resources pages under Publications.

William Charles Nation, the writer of this memoir, died on 29 May 1930 in Levin in his 91st year. See his obituary in the Message of Life 1st July 1930 which is available as a scanned pdf file. He is buried in the Levin cemetery on the corner of Mako Mako and Tiro Tiro Roads in Levin. Lawrence Watty Nation mentioned in this memoir was the father of Elizabeth (Betty), John, Peter and Paul. It seems he changed his name from Sigglekow to Nation after Charles Nation and Sarah Ann Sigglekow (nee Munro) married on 1 June 1913. All of the following is a transcript of his hand-written memoirs. [Items in square brackets were not in the original document.]

W.C. Nation was born in Sydney on February 18, 1840. His father and mother came out to New Zealand [Australia?] in 1838 with the Trood family. Mr Trood was a printer, and on arrival opened up a business in King Street, near Pitt Street. The father and mother of this memoir were William Nation, of Somerset, England, and Mary Jenkin Howe, of the same shire. Soon after arrival in Sydney - they both came out with the Troods - they were married at St James' Church, Sydney. Mary Howe was a domestic for Mrs Trood until her marriage, and Mr Nation came out as an apprentice to the printing business. These were the days when convicts were sent to Australia, and free emigrants had to be very careful, for there was much lawlessness and the convicts were treated with great cruelty by those in authority. W.C. Nation was the eldest son of a family of nine.

W.C. Nation, the subject of this memoir, was, as stated, born at Sydney. He remembers as a small lad that his father went into business for himself as a printer and commenced business in Harrington Street in part of the store owned by Bryers and Learmont merchants. W.C. Nation went to a day school in York Street, the room being under the Wesleyan church. In those days the soldiers' barracks was located between George and Sussex streets, east and west, and Jamieson and Wynard streets, north and south, and the boy used to go through the barracks every day to school. In Harrington Street his father printed the "Layman Prompter" and the "Press" edited by Dr Laing.

The printing office was removed to Gloucester Street, three doors behind St Patrick's Cathedral. Here "The Voice in the Wilderness" was printed for the Presbyterian body, and Mr Nation senior started in January, 1856, "The Australian Band of Hope Review and Children's Friend". It was published every alternate Saturday, price 3 pence, 16 pages demi octavo. This journal interested our boy and he not only learned the type boxes and set type for the journal, but gradually worked into the business of printer. It shaped his life course, and in after years, when he entered business for himself as a newspaper proprietor, he worked through the press for temperance, "gospel truth", and Spiritualism.

As a boy he remembers buying tops and marbles at Henry Parkes stationery and toy shop in Hunter Street, near George Street. Henry Parkes in years after was Sir Henry, a notable

Sydney politician. Our boy was present at the turning of the first sod of the Sydney-Paramatta railway. He knew Sydney and suburbs well for he was runner for "The Voice in the Wilderness". He was put to Doctor Kinnear's high school in Lyons Terrace, Hyde Park South, and overstudy told upon his health, when he was sent to Manly Beach to spend three months with Mr and Mrs Miles. Manly was then in the backwoods. No steamer ran there, and the walk was from North Shore through much scrub country, where snakes and kangaroos and opossums had the field to themselves. All the way from North Shore to Manly few houses were to be seen.

Our boy spent three months at Manly, which he says were the happiest days of his life. The Bush, the lagoon, the hills, the beach, the sea, the rocks -- all worked wonders with the lad. He fished from a dinghy day after day, and caught trout; he loved to help the settlers open the lagoon when it was high, and letting the water out to the sea; he took great interest in a Sunday School held in Mr Miles' cottage; and when he returned to Sydney he left his heart behind him.

When about 16 years of age he took a warm interest in Band of Hope work, and attended the Baptist Chapel Sunday school, in Bathurst Street. Here he came in contact with several good lads and this led him to go to the Baptist Chapel, which his mother attended, and under the preaching of the Reverend J. Voller he was baptised and made a member of the Church.

**He Comes to New Zealand**

In 1857 Mr Wm Lightband of Nelson, New Zealand, interviewed Mr Nation at Sydney and urged him to go to New Zealand and start a paper in opposition to the "Nelson Examiner". It resulted in Mr Nation, with his family, his plant, and several hands, leaving Sydney in September, 1857, in the brig "Dart", and after a fine passage of nine days, arriving at Nelson port. The paper was named "The Nelson Colonist", and the office was away down on the beach road, not far from the Fifeshire Rock. It was away from the town and militated against business, but after a while an office was built up town in Waimea Street, and from that spot the "Colonist" of today is published. The office, though, being on the beach gave Mr Nation, when a vessel was signalled of going out on the boat and boarding the vessels that came from beyond. In those days there was no cable, no telegraph with other parts of New Zealand, and vessels were stormed for the latest papers from which to clip news.

**W.C. Nation's Reminiscences**

As a child [I] remember going with my mother to the Methodist Chapel in Princes Street, Sydney. We then lived close to the building. Then my parents lived at Miller's Point, and I used to go to the Baptist Sunday School in Bassett Street -- a long walk. It was here that I received my first Sunday School prize, and I was coming home with it full of joy. On the way an older boy asked me to let them have a look at the book. I was pleased that he should want to see it, and handed it to him. But he ran off with the book and I went home in tears. This, I believe, was my first sorrow in this life.

My father shifted to Harrington Street, where he was in business on his own account in part of a store owned by Bryers and Learmont, Scotch Presbyterians. We lived in front of the office and I was sent to the day school in York Street, held under the Methodist Chapel. Mr McPhail was the teacher. I remember playing truant for a fortnight, and spent the days mostly on the Circular Quay where I delighted in seeing the slinging of merchandise both off and on the vessels, the slinging of horses from the hold into the water; and I learnt the difference between brigs and brigantines and ships. I sat on the end of the wharf and watched the fishes and many a crumb of my lunch went amongst them. Although I played truant for a fortnight I learnt much of the ships and how the great business of the sea was carried on. But my enjoyment ended in discovery and I was punished at school by being stood on a form with a tall dunce's cap on my head.

While living in Harrington Street my father printed a monthly journal for the Presbyterians called "The Voice in the Wilderness". He also printed "The Press" (weekly) for Doctor John Dunmore Lang and another paper for other proprietors "The Layman's Prompter". I used to do some work in the office, and I well remember how my arms used to ache as I used the "ball" to put ink on the forms, instead of the roller.

In going to the day school I had to pass through the soldiers barracks, which was then situated between George and Sussex streets. Here I saw something of a soldier's life in his home and on the parade ground. (But some of my boyhood experiences are related on a former page of this book.)

In 1857 our family came to New Zealand. I joined the Baptist church in Bridge Street, and became a teacher in the Sunday School. I also sat in the choir, Miss Daniell being organist. I joined the Y.M.C.A. and worked for it; also the xx and Temperance society, and then I took hold of a Band of Hope and worked it up to a proud position. I interviewed influential gentlemen and got them to lecture on attractive subjects. And I spent much labour in preparing programmes of entertainments by the young people.

Nor did I forget to work for the Baptist Church in the midst of it all. I used to help fill the baptistery for the baptisms, was a power in preparing for the team meetings, and when there was a young people's picnic I was looked to as a capable manager. My father became precentor of the Presbyterian church, and I used to attend their singing practices. And at the Wesleyan Church at the anniversary tea meetings I was generally in the choir to help with the anthems.

I was very fond of foot racing and cricket. And I joined the volunteers under Capt. Travers, and the company was prepared by pretty hard drill to go to New Plymouth to take part in the war with the Maoris. As a youth I had a good constitution and I could hold my own in the sports and pastimes I engaged in.

In going to the various churches at the anniversaries and singing practices I came across several desirable young women acquaintances, but though we were on the best of terms, I did not find a magnet. I walked about much with a Miss L. Hooper, but she was not my choice, and I went on until I was 23 years of age before I found my affinity, and this was in the

Baptist Sunday School in Miss Annie Webley, oldest daughter of Mr J Webley cloth manufacturer, of Brook Street Valley. We were both teachers at the Sunday School, and in 1864 we were married by Mr Biss at the home of her parents.

I must not forget to say that about this time the Wakamarina diggings broke out, near Havelock, and nearly every businessman in Nelson took on the gold fever and went all over the Mokotapu hill to search for the precious metal. Joshua Johns urged me to join him and Samuel Fittal and go too. I, after some thought, consented and we three went. But Fittal was taken ill and though we went to the Pelorus River one afternoon and tried with our dish, we did not get a "colour". As Fittal was away from medical help we considered it best to return the following day and we sold our belongings and tramped away home again. This ended our search for gold.

Of course I forfeited my place at the "Colonist" office, where I had worked since we came to New Zealand, and I wrote to Christchurch for a fresh place. Mr Collins, who at one time had worked on the “Nelson Examiner" wrote and asked me to come as quickly as possible – wages £ 3.10/- a week and 1/6 an hour overtime. This meant the breakup of the old associations and leaving home. But what of our marriage? We talked it over and felt that it would be best to get through the ceremony at once -- I to go on to Christchurch, and my wife to follow in a month. I did not consider it safe to leave a good opening down south just to run home for marriage. All were agreed. So we were married on 12 August, 1864, and after the ceremony I left in a steamer that was on the point of sailing.

My wife remained in Nelson and I was soon in Christchurch, where I entered the "Press" office jobbing room, where I spent 13 years.

In a month's time my wife came from Nelson, and I met her in Lyttleton. We walked over the hill together, for there was no tunnel between Heathcote and Lyttleton then. We sat on the hillside and had our first meal together there. I had taken a three-roomed house in Madras Street South, about 100 yards from the Railway Station. Here we lived very happily for some time. We both attended the Congregational Church, held in Bonnington's Hall, and we taught in the Sunday School. At the Press office, in company with George Jones, (afterwards an M.L.L.) we started the "Temperance Messenger", the first Temperance paper in New Zealand. Then we started "The Southern Record", a non-sectarian religious paper, which we after disposed of to Mr J.G. Baker a Wesleyan bookseller.

Later my wife and I fell in with the Griffen family who kept a shop on the Papanui road. This led to us going to the Brethren meetings and John Howard and I started a ragged school, Howard beating up scholars and I teaching them in the little Oddfellows Hall. This school grew into an ordinary Sunday School. Then wife and I joined the Brethren, and while amongst them I started "The Message of Life" a gospel monthly of eight pages* (*carried it on for seven years, from 1867 to 1875). My parents now came from Nelson to Christchurch and my father set the type for the "Message" at home. We lived in Madras Street until after Mary was born. Later Annie (my wife) took a trip to Nelson, taking baby with her, and I carried the little one over the hill in a shawl, on my back, Maori fashion.

It was in Christchurch that I was led to speak in public. One Sunday night a home missionary (Mr Binsmead) was speaking near the Papanui Bridge and during his speaking two or three young men kept interjecting chaff. I waited until Mr Binsmead had finished, then stepped into his place and "let go". It was a sudden impulse and words flowed freely. There was a good crowd and they drew close around me. Several shook hands with me at the close of my address and hoped that I would not keep my mouth shut in future. This led me to preach "the old, old story" in the open air and at the Brethren meetings. Meanwhile I worked in the Sunday School and at the Music Hall had about 150 or 200 children with several teachers.

In 1875 I left Christchurch and after working a fortnight in the Government Printing Office, at Wellington, I was offered the position of overseer of the jobbing room at the office of the "New Zealand Times". We lived on the Terrace overlooking the harbour. Gradually I drifted away from the old Orthodox teachings, though I taught in Mr Hazelden's Sunday School for a time. Mr Chantry Harris was then proprietor of the "Times", and it was not long before he added the oversight of the machine room to my duties, and finally he put the whole of the business except the publishing and the bookkeeping in my charge. The office was moved from where the old "Independent" under Thos. McKenzie had been printed for years to where the "New Zealander" was published, but came to grief. The premises were in the block near where the Midland Hotel now stands. Here I was Mr Harris' chief man and confidant, and ran the newspaper composing room, the jobbing, and the machine rooms. I had control of everything.

In 1880 I purchased "The Wairarapa Standard" published at Greytown N., and removed there. Here I had a hard fight. My brother Edward joined me in the venture, but he got tired of it and went back to Wellington. The paper was not what it was made out to be by Mr Wakelin, and it was a great strain on me to keep going. I did a lot of riding over the country collecting news, money and jobbing. But I was strong and knew no fatigue to speak of.

Before Spiritualism broke out in our home I preached occasionally for the Wesleyan's and for two years I was superintendent of the Church of England Sunday School and sang in the Church of England choir. The extraordinary spiritual phenomena which happened in 1893 are given in a book on our experiences [*The Unseen World*].

I took much interest in the children of the town. I joined Mr Rush first thing in his juvenile meetings and when he left I carried on. I also got up children’s entertainments, drilling them in singing and elocution. I wrote to the borough council suggesting the origination of "Arbor Day" in New Zealand, and the suggestion was favourably received. I was left to act as secretary and majordomo and I carried out the work successfully, receiving from Mr Ritchie of the Agriculture Department a letter of commendation for my effort. I carried on this work for two or three years after.

I printed a monthly journal in advocacy of Spiritualism for 3½ years. It was an eight-page crown 4to [quarto], set in pica 2 copy price 1d. With two or three of my girls I went to Papawai for some time and held meetings in the meeting house there. The Maoris in a trap conveyed our little organ to the place and we had good meetings.

I helped to form a Psychological Society in Greytown and we had as mediums Mrs Cotter, Mrs Loasby, and Mrs R Bright. The circles in our home were of unusual interest. Clergyman attacks on Spiritualism drew me out and I spoke at Morrison Bush schoolhouse and published my remarks in the Wairarapa Standard.

For two years I acted as superintendent of the Church of England Sunday School, Miss Ethel Knell assisting me.

In the year 1896 I sold the Wairarapa Standard to Wm Roydhouse, and leaving mater and the girls in Greytown I went to Shannon to arrange for starting a paper there. I went to Christchurch to purchase type, purchased a machine for £50 from W. H. Smith of Palmerston North, arranged with my wife's brother Joseph to build an office, purchased 1/8 of an acre of ground in Ballance Street, and Charlie, from this time, was associated in business with me. He, with Fred Jones, rode on three horses round from Greytown to Shannon. The office was very slow in building and I was put to considerable expense boarding Joseph Webley, John Vernon, myself, and the boys at the hotel. As soon as the roof was on the office, Charlie and Fred Jones slept in a back room, while Percy and I dossed in the front office. Then Eva came round from Greytown and started dressmaking in a front room in the office, she sleeping there. It was a rough time for all of us, for we had to make a fire in the open-air at the back, have our meals on a bench at the back of the office, and put up with inconveniences. We couldn't find a cottage for some time, until at last we got one near Mr Hensman's. Then Bertha and Jessie came round from Greytown to work in the office, also Grandma and Grandpa Nation, and they lived in this cottage. By and by we secured another house from Mrs Butt not far from the office, and here grandma and grandpa and Uncle John lived. We next got a house from Mr Cassie, over the line, and as mater and Annie had been having a very bad time in Greytown we sent for them. During their enforced stay in Greytown, Mrs Rogers of the Greytown hotel was very good to them. Annie was suffering from an ulcerated leg. Mary was still left behind. She had married Fred Barratt, and now she and husband followed with Norman and Walter as a little kiddie. Fred got work on the river drafting logs, but was not very successful at this. Mary had a hard time of it.

We turned out a good paper called "The Manawatu Farmer", started October 9, 1893, John Vernon working down the line for advertisements and news. I had to do much scribbling, while Jessie and Bertha and grandpa worked at case. Often, when the formes were on the machine young fellows about would come in and turn the formes off, making the old machine rattle with the speed they put on. When mater came round to Shannon we began to get a bit square, but we all felt the loss of our old comfortable home in Greytown where we lived on the Kuratiwhiti road, with an orchard around us.

During our stay in Shannon and I again worked up "Arbor Day". I got up juvenile entertainments in the schoolhouse and the first effort at planting was in Ballance Street from the hotel up to the Reserve. A second year the Maoris took part planting along Plimmer Terrace, while the children planted trees along by the schoolhouse in Grey Street. The girls now took a hand in providing life in the town. They took part in concerts and several dances and balls in Fitchett's Hall, since removed.

We did very little in holding spiritualistic circles during our stay in Shannon. While we were there Grandma Nation "passed on" and she was buried in the cemetery on the hill. We spent four years in Shannon and then removed to Levin, taking the Manawatu Farmer printing plant with us. For years I acted as Registrar of Births, Marriages and Deaths at Shannon and as a Justice of the Peace.

**Levin**

It was a very heavy task shifting from Shannon all the plant of the office and our household goods. The change from one town to another was brought about by the fact that Levin as a town was outgrowing Shannon, that "Joey Ivess" had started a paper at Levin under the name of the "Levin Express", and unless we made a move, Shannon could not support us. So I went to Levin on hearing that Joey had sold out to two of his hands there and that they did not agree. We came to terms Chas. and I agreeing to pay them £30 goodwill, they to remove all their plant away from Levin. The "office" was a four-roomed cottage in which a dressmaker had carried on business formerly. With our office plant we found the place too small and we had to enlarge. The windows of the office in Shannon being large we brought them to Levin. It was in 1897, I believe, that we started in this town. We secured a dwelling in Cambridge Street not far from the Anglican Church. What an expense the shifting was. Looking back I wonder how we survived the strain. In addition to the office premises we had an office close by where John Vernon lodged and this before we left Shannon. Well, we got upon our feet, and to produce the "Manawatu Farmer" as cheaply as possible we put two girls on at case: Jessie Nicholson and Louie Alloway. We had with us "Pony Merson" formerly of Greytown and my brother John. Out of the four mentioned Vernon, my brother John, Merson, and Jessie Nicholson "passed on" years ago. I must not forget to mention that we took Fred Jones into the business and he was a good hustler, but too fond of sport while Chas. and I worked. As time wore on we jibbed and told Fred we could not go on with him doing the grand and we the work. He kicked and said he would go out of the business for £400 as his share. We agreed, raised the money and he went. Chas. and I plodded on, but the raising of £400 to buy him out and the uphill pull we had brought us to the conclusion that the burden was too heavy to bear and we sold out to a company. Had Jones played the game we could have built up a splendid business and been independent. He was the millstone which sank us. Chas. went to Ohakune and worked with P.J. Dunne, who had the “Times” there. Dunne was too fond of the waipero and the business was drifting back, when Chas. took it over. He strengthened it but had domestic trials. However, he pulled through. As for myself I remained in Levin and for a time managed the paper for the Company. Previous to the break with Fred Jones he arranged with Mr Hope for the purchase of his residence at the corner of Cambridge and Exeter streets, and we moved in there, Fred and his wife (he had married Jessie) living with us. I still was Registrar of Births, Marriages and Deaths, and I, also, was appointed Coroner for the district, which I held for many years.

In Levin we did not as a family take part in public entertainments as we did in Shannon. I did take up work at the Horowhenua village settlement among the young people, and we had some good gatherings. We planted a row of poplars all along the road there, but they

disappeared by degrees. By a concert in Levin I planted a "Memorial Avenue" in Exeter Street, between the two churches, and the trees are growing today.

Once settled in Levin I started "The Message of Life" 8 pages, demy 4to, monthly. This paper I have published for over 18 years now (1921) setting the type myself in a room at the back of our house, and getting the formes machined at the printing office. We started a Spiritualist Society in our first home in Levin, then we held services in the Road Board room, when C.N. Roberts (since passed on) and R.H. Taylor were the mediums -- and they were good. I was chosen president, and have held the office for many years now. In time a little hall was built, when the sections belonging to be Wellington-Manawatu Railway were put up to auction. In this little hall we had some happy meetings with Mrs Sigglekow as medium for speaking and Mrs Robinson for clairvoyance. We did a great deal of work among the spirits in the lower planes of spirit life, Mr Windelev been much used for them to come through. He passed on after a good period spent in this work.

Before F. Jones left the office he entered into an agreement with Mr Hope for the purchase of the residence on the hill where he lived. Mr Hope came to me and offered the place at 15/- a week. When Jones left Levin I took over the place from Hope and here in 1921 (at the time of writing) we are living, mater and I and Annie and Harold, and Mr Averill, who has worked in the garden and made it a place of beauty. I may here say that Annie bought the place from us, paying £900. Mater and I out of this gave each of the girls and Chas. £100 each, retaining the balance to live on. It was while living here that my brother John passed on, and we buried him in Shannon, next to mother’s grave. At the rear of our property lived Mr and Mrs Sigglekow, and she attended our meetings and by my aid was developed in our front room. She became one of us, and her psychic gifts were excellent. She was brought into our lives by spirit people, and in time was married to Chas. and lived happily with him.

**Our Family**

Mary had the misfortune to lose her husband, Fred during our residence in Levin. He was employed with Chas and I at the office as reporter and lived in Weraroa Street. He had his home lighted by electricity, and in seeing to the acetylene tank one evening it exploded, struck him in the forehead, and rendered him senseless. After nursing him some weeks and consciousness not returning he was removed to the Wellington Hospital, where he lay for 20 weeks, only getting a glimmer of consciousness now and then. He was buried in Karori cemetery. In 1914 the Great War broke out and Mary's two sons Eric and Walter volunteered. Eric was engaged in repairing the disabled motor cars. Walter went into the trenches. Both came back free of wounds, though Walter was in hospital both in France and England. Norman went into camp but the war closing he came home. He was already married. Hilda married John Hesson. Elsie remained single. Eva married Alf Oldfield. They came across each other when we lived in Shannon. They settled at Kimbolton, then at Cheltenham and Feilding where they prospered and had a comfortable home. The family comprised Bertha, Alfred, Molly and Percy.

Bertha married John Devine at Levin. His work was at Bartholomew's sawmill as manager. Bertha's psychic gifts are reported in the book "The Unseen World". The children were Reginald who passed away in childhood at Levin; Clarence and Hazel. The family migrated to Kaingaroa, north of Auckland, where Jack managed a big sawmill and did well. But before going North Jack and his wife were some time in Wellington where Jack and Harold Plimmer were in business in the tea line.

Jessie married Fred J Jones, whom Chas. and I took into business. He spent too much time on pleasure and left Chas and I to do the work, so we parted. He went to America on a visit, taking Jessie with him. Mater and I took charge of their first baby Raymond, while they were absent. On their return they removed to Auckland, where Fred took up newspaper work in one of the offices. He afterwards went to Hamilton and Rotorua. He went to Raetihi and started the "Waimarino Call". Left Raetihi for Rotorua, got into trouble there and left for Sydney, leaving his wife and family behind him -- a family of four: Raymond, Muriel, Audrey, and Keith. Charlie's wife had a property next to us on the hill in Levin and she and Chas and generously gave Jessie and family the privilege of living in the four-roomed house for years. Jessie suffered much from an internal complaint and had to go to Palmerston hospital again and again. Fred did not return from Australia except once on a visit in 1921, and then he was with his family only a few days. It is not saying too much to say that he did not send the monetary support to his wife and family that his good billet in Queensland gave him the privilege to do. Being next door to us in Levin we did what he could for the deserted wife and children. Having the house rent-free from Sarah and Charlie was a great help to them.

Charlie and I went into business together when we settled in Shannon. We started "The Manawatu Farmer" there, and worked together very closely to establish it. We shifted the plant and paper to Levin after four years spent in Levin [? Shannon]. Then we took Fred Jones into partnership. Business prospered through our hard work, but Jones shirked and we gave him £400 to get rid of him. This crippled us and the burden became so heavy that we sold the paper and printing plant to a company. Chas. left shares in the new company which, being mismanaged, he lost all. My share helped me to purchase a house on the hill from Mr Hope after Jones left. Chas went to Ohakune and worked with Mr R.J. Dunne on the “Times” managing the paper for him. Chas. had married, but his career in matrimony was spoiled by his first wife getting mixed up with a lodger. A divorce followed and Chas, though free, was much shattered by the blow. But the sun shone again. Mrs Sigglekow had lost her husband. She had been living next door to us in Levin and had been sitting for development work with mater and I in our front room with excellent results. She was a young woman, worthy of a good man’s care and love, and Chas. made her an offer of marriage, which she accepted. They were married at our house, and they both settled at Ohakune. It proved a happy union, and Sarah, as we always called her, proved her worth in the years that followed. Mater and I missed her, for she had sat with us and been a channel for messages and exhortations from friends over the border. She is as dear to us as any of our own. Sarah helped Chas in business where she was able, and her son Lawrence went into the office with Chas and learned his trade. Chas. prospered in business by close application, and when the war broke out, the

proprietor of the “Call” at Raetihi was called to the front, and he asked Chas. to take over his paper. Chas. raised the deposit money and made his home in Raetihi. Here he worked with a will, business prospered, he added to the printing plant, and then put in a linotype machine. With a living partner in his wife, thoroughly domesticated and a home bird, all was well. But no family came to them until a little girl came into their lives in January 1920. They named her Violet Pearl, and she is the charm of the household. With a prosperous business, a comfortable home and their home their own property, all is well. At the time of writing Chas runs the "Ohakune Times", which he purchased from Dunne and also the "Call". Lawrence has been with Chas four years, and while Chas resides in Raetihi and sees to the "Call", Lawrence is in Ohakune on the “Times”.

Annie married Harold Plimmer, a grandson of John Plimmer, “the father of Wellington”. At first Harold ran a store in Shannon. Then he went to Wellington and with Jack Devine opened up a business for the sale of teas. He was also clever at photography. Harold and Annie, with others went on a tour to the North, also to the Islands and Australia, and they had a good time all round. Harold and Annie, however were unfortunate in respect to children. They lost one after the other in early days, and it seemed as if there would be no issue left. But a son came, and they named him Harold. Unfortunately the father lost his life before the child was born. The father was in a motorcycle race near Palmerston North when something went wrong with the cycle which dashed against a post killing the rider on the spot. It was a terrible blow to Annie and she feared for the birth of the child, but all was well. After the child was born she came to Levin and lived with mater and I. In the course of years Annie made an offer for the property where mater and I were living. We sold it to her for £900 and donated £100 to each of the children. Annie has spent money on the place, for she was well provided for when her husband died.

Percy was the youngest. He was quick of intellect, but excitable. At school he got on well, and could use his fists when set upon. When we came to Shannon from Greytown he came with us and took out the papers. When I got up entertainments in Greytown Percy was very good as a performer, and in Shannon he was the same. When the Boer war broke out he caught the war spirit and begged us to let him go. He feared he would not pass as a soldier, so he practised with dumb-bells; and so intent was he on going that he went to a blacksmith (Austice) and learned how to shoe horses for, said he "if I cannot get away in the ranks I will try to get as assistant shoer of horses". Then he bought a sax horn and learnt all the bugle calls, so that he could go as bugler if other means failed. He went into camp at Newtown Park, Duncan Anderson, his chum, going with him. They went all through the war together and both fell together at Bothasberg. [There is a memorial to him in Shannon near the old railway station behind the large war memorial.]

## Appendix 4 My favourite family photographs

There are three old family photographs that I am particularly fond of. I thought about each photograph carefully, considering the reasons why I liked it, and then I wrote about those reasons. Here are the photographs with the reasons.

### The Tedwisarn family photograph


This photograph involves my wife, Kanitha's, family. It was taken in front of the Boonnag family house in the first (left) compound in 30 North Sathorn Road, Bangkok in 1952. The occasion was Boonnag's birthday, and he was giving away money to celebrate, which of course brought all the children together at his house.

The families in the photograph are 1 Kiatkong, 2 Roeksbutr, 3 Peetaneelapalin, 4 Boonnag Tedwisarn, 5 Worachanin & Tedwisarn, 6 Boonlerd Tedwisarn, 7 a few children who were known but were found unable to place in a family and who are not directly related to each other. In the labelled photograph, the person's nickname or name is given followed by the number (1 to 6) of the immediate family they belong to.

The families in the photograph along with others all lived in three adjoining compounds. The compounds included people largely from Kanitha's mother's side of the family, the descendants of Boonnag, Boonpring, Boonprom, and Banjert Tedwisarn.

In the left compound, there were five houses (House 1: Boonnag Tedwisarn (brother of Boonprom), House 2: Boonpring's descendants (Tedwisarn & Roeksbutr), House 3: descendants of Boonnag (which included his son Boonlerd), House 4: the Boonwong family

(Chaluay, Chawee, Chalaw, Chalam, Chaliew, Chalong). The mother in the Boonwong family was Boomprom, sister of Boonnag. House 5: Banjert Tedwisarn (brother of Boonprom), his wife Rian and their three sons Weera (Dang), Charern, Pipat (the artist, previously called Jaruay). The second compound had four houses for the Kiatkong family, Peetaneelapalin family, the family of Pu and his mother Boonwong, and one other family. The third compound only had one house for Pad's family.

The Kiatkong family (1) consists of Pannee (Noi), Taew, Maliga (Tiew), Dtui. The oldest child Suntat (Tat) is not in the photograph (He became governor of Nakon Panom). Their parents were Sawat and Pratoom. They were not related to the Tedwisarn family, but they asked to use the family name Tedwisarn.

The Roeksbutr family (2) consists of Kanitha (Pao), Nakorn (Pa), Orn-anong (Mao), Wongsuda (Mu), and Worawut (Ti). Suttilak (Tu) and Jongrak (Jib) were not born yet. Their parents were Leon Roeksbutr and Boonlom Issarangkoon na Ayudhya. Boonlom's mother was Boonpring Tedwisarn, sister of Boonnag Tedwisarn.

The Peetaneelapalin (3) family consists of Rewadee (Aad), Weerawat (Odd), Aew, and E. Another child born later was Oui. Fe may have been the daughter of another wife (Tam). Their parents were Rewat and Nu. The connection between them and the other families is unknown, but there was some family connection.

The Boonnag Tedwisarn family (4) is the only one where the parents are in the photograph. Their children are Boonlert, Boonler, Suree, Ying, Narong (Paan), Pui, Pong, Piew. The only children in the photograph are Ying and Narong. Boonnag was the brother of Boonpring.

The Worachanin (Prajuab) & Tedwisarn family (5) consists of Boonlom Issarrangkoon na Ayudhya, Boonplug Pliansakul, Somporn Ying Wattana, Prajuab Worachanin, and Supot (Piak) Tedwisarn. Only Prajuab and Supot (Piak) are in the photograph. The five children have the same mother (Boonpring Tedwisarn) but each have a different father.

The Boonlert Tedwisarn (6) family consists of Arunsri (Tim), Somchai (Ting), Toi, Tor, and Tum. Only Tim and Ting are in the photograph. Boonlerd Tedwisarn was Boonnag's oldest son. Tim later married Sompong Junmee and lived in Chiengmai.

7 Pu's mother is Wong (not mentioned elsewhere in this note). 7 Or's father is Tin (not mentioned elsewhere in this note).

Pad, Fe (Peetaneelaplin) are on the back right next to Pu.

The Boonwong family were the card playing family. Na Long was the youngest. None of the daughters married, which may partly explain why there are no children from that branch of the family in the photograph. Boonprom, sister of Boonpring, was the mother of the Boonwong family.

*Why is this one of my favourite photographs?*

There are two major reasons, the artistic nature of the photograph itself, and my connections with people in the photograph. The photo itself contains two adults and twenty-six children. It's overflowing with children. The children are all barefoot and doing the range of things that children do when they look at a camera. Brothers and sisters are not standing in their family groups but are all mixed up with others, showing that they knew each other well. This is clearly a large extended family, all living close to each other. The Maori word *whanau* describes it well. Well over sixty years after this photo was taken, Kanitha and Mao named all but one or two of the people in the photograph, showing the enduring connection. The photograph shows an age where living close to each other in this way was probably very common, but the photograph just catches the end of this age. Less than ten years later these families were living in different parts of Bangkok or in different parts of Thailand.

My connection with the photograph is that my wife, Kanitha is in the photograph along with her two brothers and two of her sisters. I have also met several of the people in the photograph. These include Prajuab, Supot (Biak), Tim, and Narong (Paan).

**Raetihi in the snow**


This photograph shows the main street, Seddon Street, of the rural town of Raetihi in the North Island of New Zealand. It was probably taken on 16 July 1927, when Raetihi had one of its heaviest snowfalls. The main street has changed since then, but almost one hundred years later, many of the same shops remain and the roof line in the photograph can still be used to locate the shops in the picture.

*Why is this one of my favourite pictures?*

There are two reasons why this is one of my favourite pictures, the artistic nature of the photograph itself, and my connections with the places and people involved in the photograph.

The photograph looks like the still from a movie about the 1920s. There is so much going on that it seems almost contrived. There are people making and throwing snowballs. There are women dressed in flapper fashions. There is a car of the era, dogs, a ladder against the front of a building. You can feel the action. But, it is not a staged picture, it is a snapshot of what was actually happening.

I have several strong personal connections with the picture even though it was taken long before I was born. The man in the front of the picture making a snowball is Norm Barratt. I recognized him as soon as I saw the photograph. He was the nephew of Charlie Nation. Charles Cecil Nation was my grandmother's second husband and was step-father of my father. Norm Barratt worked in the Raetihi Printing Office owned by Charlie Nation, and lived a few houses down Ballance Street from Charlie and my grandmother, then Sarah Ann Nation (nee Virgo). Norm was full of fun and was a frequent visitor to my grandmother's house. The photograph was taken just along from the Bank of New Zealand. The building is still there. The Raetihi Printing Office was on a parallel street to Seddon Street, King Street, not far from the back of the bank. The printing office burned down the early 1950s. The two-storey building in the background, just to the left of Norm's head, is the shop built and run by my grandparents on my mother's side of the family, Walter and Harriet Ashwell. If you look at a blown-up version of the picture, you can see the Ashwell name on the curved facade of the verandah. The Ashwells lived in the shop, and it is mentioned a lot in my grandmother's memoirs, *My Life* by Harriet Ashwell. My father and mother married on 10 July 1929. For reasons described in my grandmother's book, the marriage was sudden, so at the time of the photograph, there was no family connection between the Nation family (represented by Norm Barratt and the likely photographer Charlie Nation or my father) and the Ashwell family. It is coincidental that both sides of my family are represented in the photograph. Many years later after my father's death, I moved from Ohakune to Raetihi to live with my sister for three years. I got to know the main street of Raetihi well. By that time, my Ashwell grandparents had moved to Gisborne, and the Ashwell shop was now a grocery store run by the Marshall family. My father's mother, my grandmother, still lived in the same house in Raetihi, but Charlie Nation had long since died, and my grandmother lived with her third husband William Waring, Uncle Bill. Norm Barratt and his wife still lived down the street from my grandmother.

**Our Unsworth gang**

This photograph is of four of the children of Walter and Bessie Unsworth. They are Bill, Iris, Allan and Fred. It was taken around 1917. Walter Unsworth is my grandfather on my father's side of the family.

*Why is this one of my favourite pictures?*

Like the previous photograph of Raetihi, this is like the still from a movie, and I have a particular movie, or series of short films, in mind, namely *Our Gang*, also known as *The Little Rascals*. The short films were produced from 1922 to 1944 and involved children from a poor neighbourhood in the USA getting up to all kinds of mischief. When I was a child, this series was very popular indeed and we watched them before the main movie with great delight.

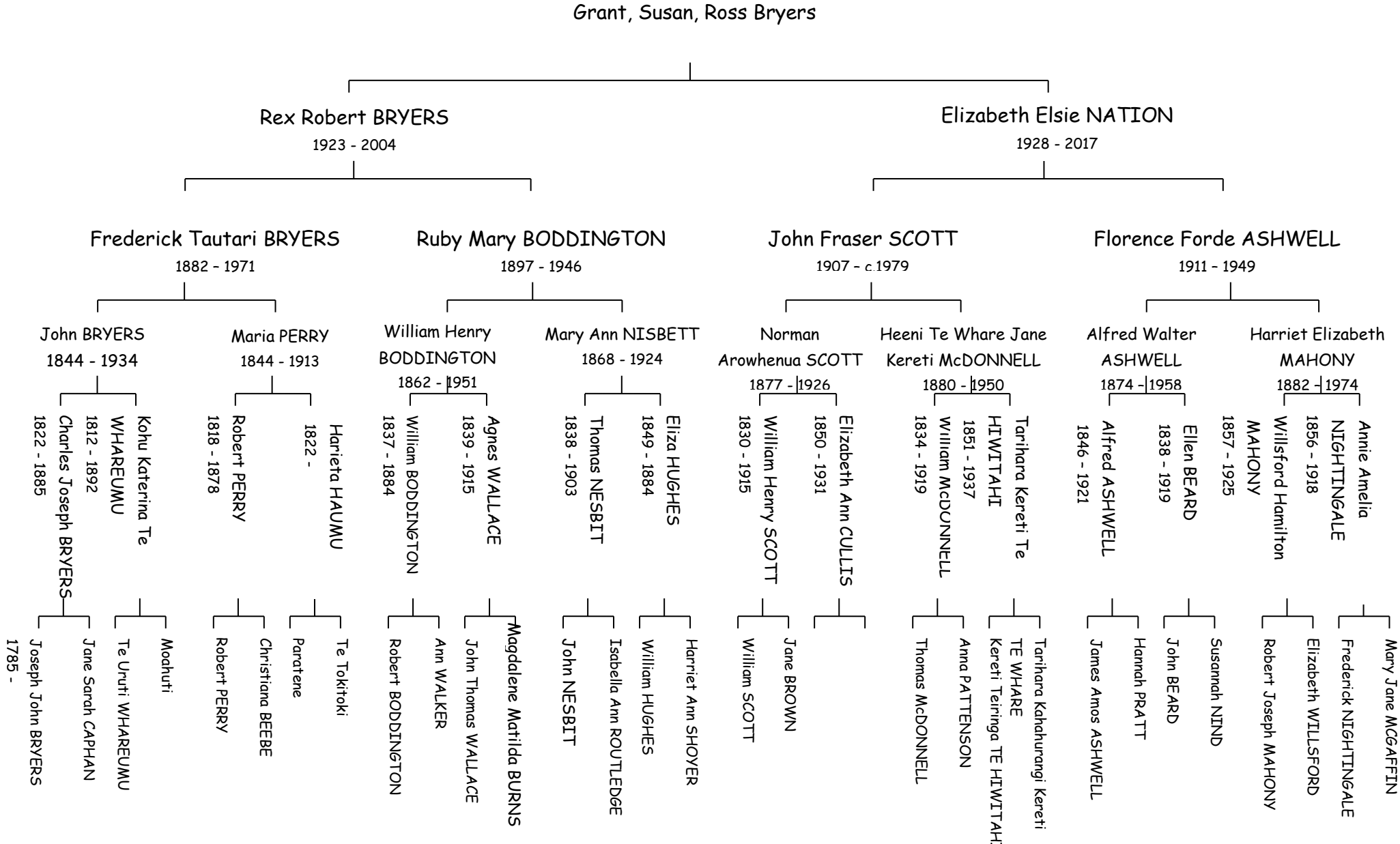
The way that Bill, Iris, Allan and Fred are dressed in the photograph is very similar to the way Our Gang was dressed – somewhat overdressed in terms of quantity of clothing which did not quite fit or which was worn not to fit. The boys have big boots and hats. They are clearly not thrilled to have to sit still to have their photograph taken. While Iris and Allan are quietly resigned to their fate, Bill and Fred are not at all happy about it. They would all rather be off doing something else – getting up to mischief.

My personal connection to this photograph is that these children are some of my father's half-brothers and half-sisters. Along with my father, they are the children of Walter Nowell

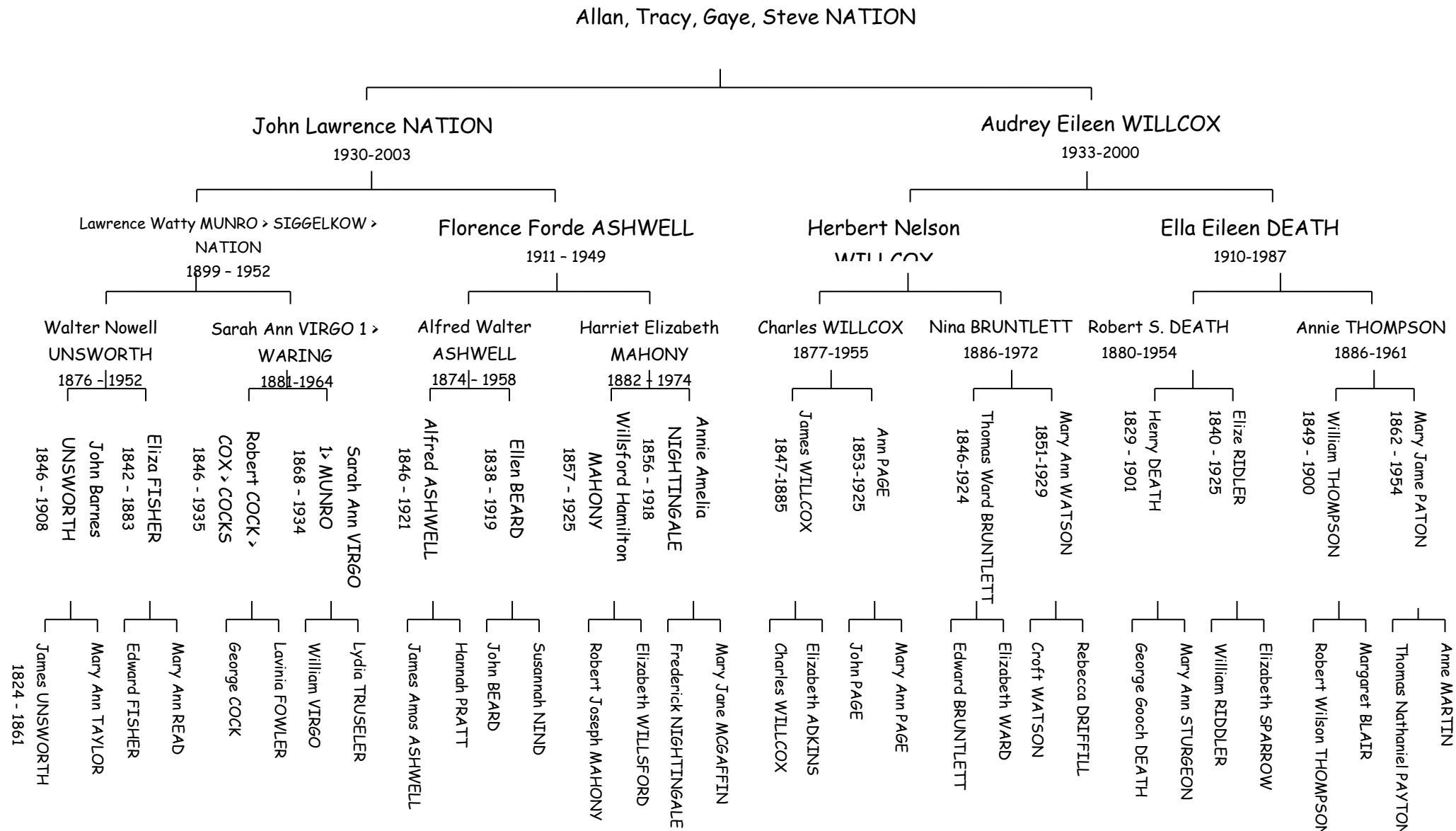
Unsworth, and are thus my uncles and aunt. Allan is the father of Helen Unsworth, and Helen and I worked closely on editing Edna's book on the Unsworth family. Bill (Walter) is the father of Trevor Unsworth who is the same age as me with a birthday in the same month. My father did not know who his father was. I was lucky enough to discover the connection and be welcomed by my various newly-discovered cousins.

## Appendix 5 Ancestry trees for Betty, John, Peter and Paul

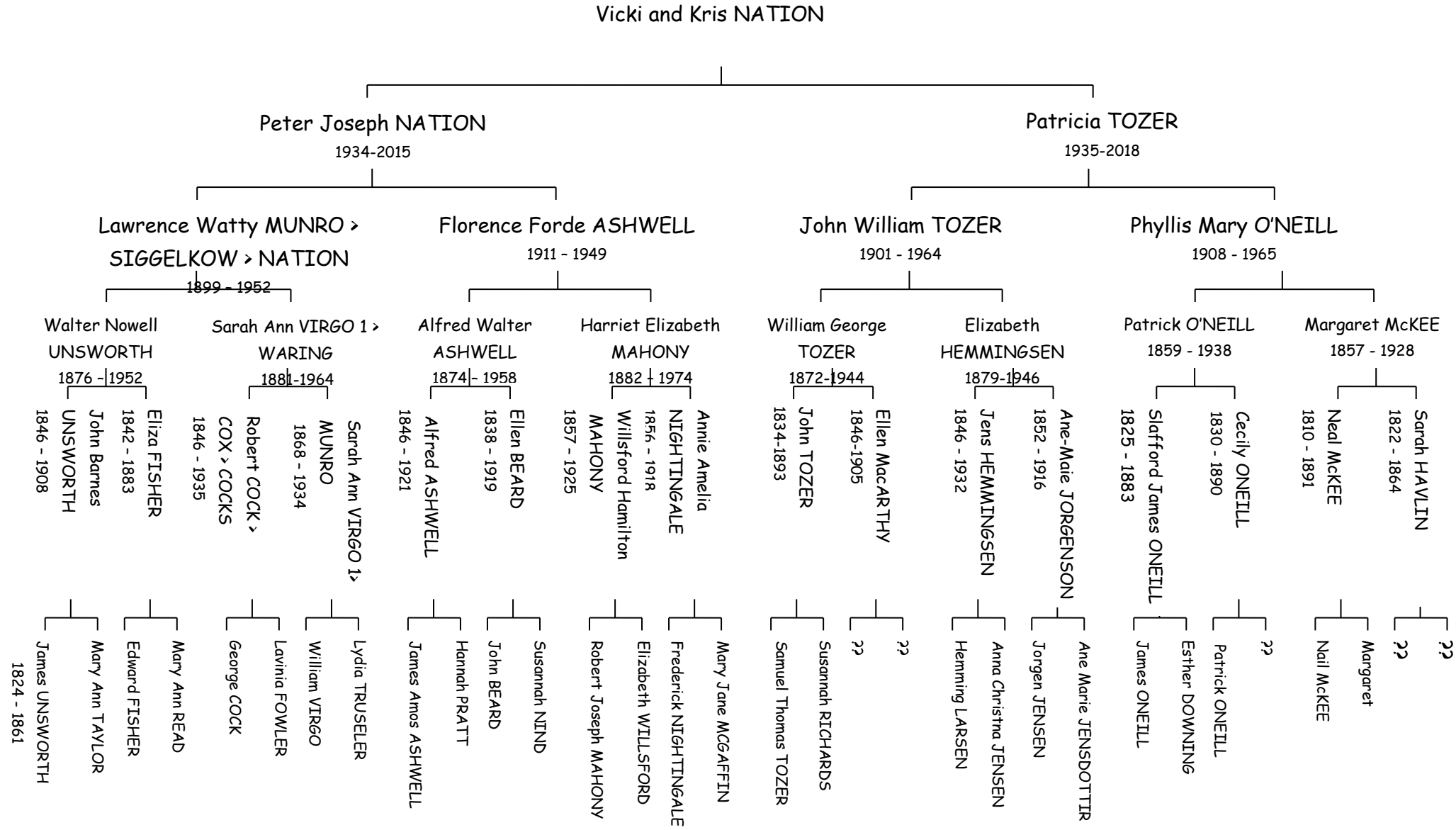
## ANCESTOR CHART for Elizabeth Bryer's family



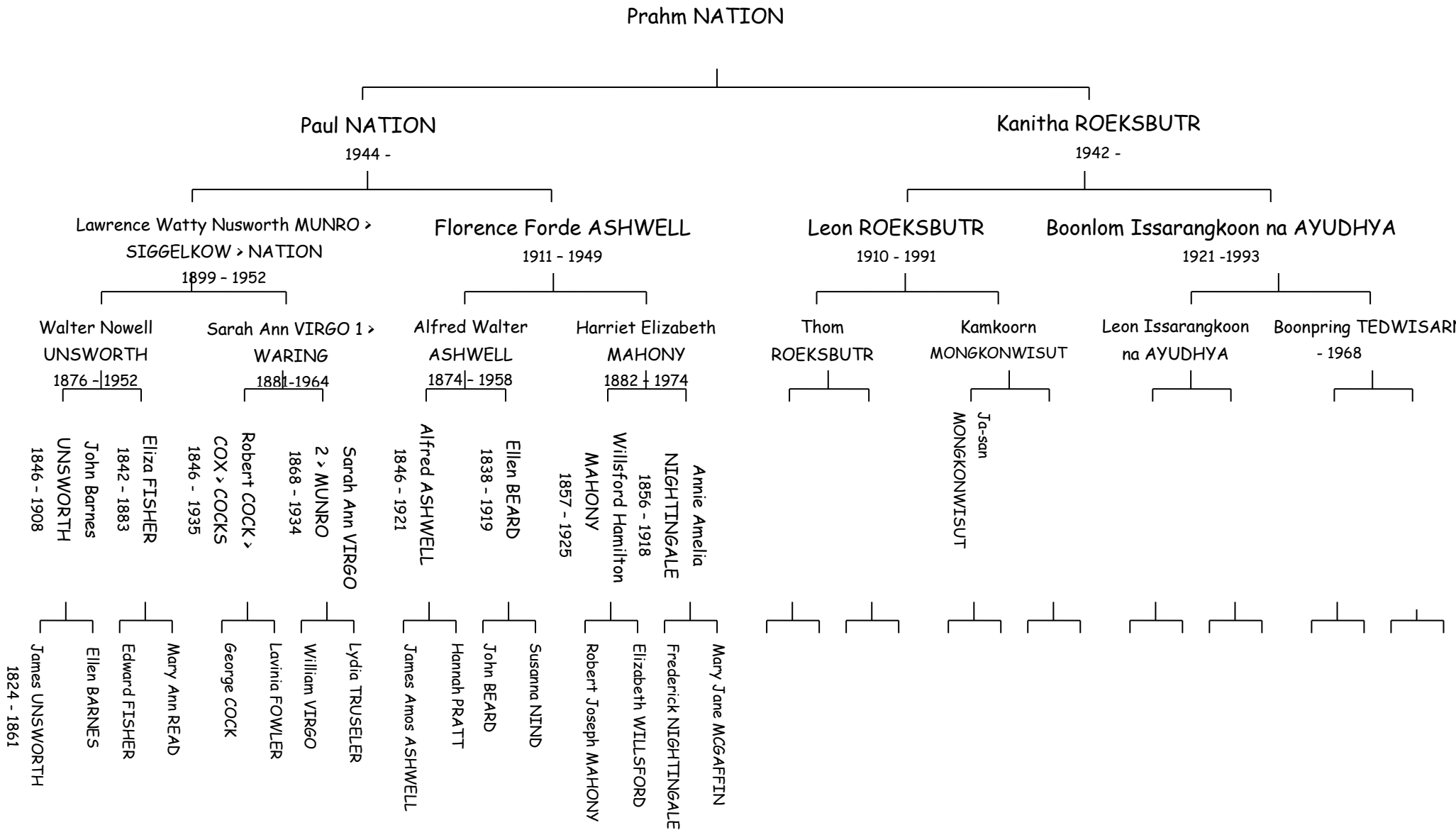
## ANCESTOR CHART for John Nation's family



**ANCESTOR CHART for Peter Nation's family**



## ANCESTOR CHART for Paul Nation's family



## Appendix 6 Paul Chronology

| Year | Age | Location | Events |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1944 | | | Born 28 April 1944 |
| 1945 | 1 | | |
| 1946 | 2 | | |
| 1947 | 3 | | |
| 1948 | 4 | | |
| 1949 | 5 | Ohakune School | Mother died 7 Dec 1949 |
| 1950 | 6 | Ohakune School | Primer 2 & Primer 3 |
| 1951 | 7 | Ohakune School | Primer 4 |
| 1952 | 8 | Ohakune School | Father died; Standard 2, Peter Phippen. |
| 1953 | 9 | Ohakune School, Raetihi School | Standard 3: Mr McLeod, moved early in the year to Raetihi, Teacher: Doug Wright |
| 1954 | 10 | Raetihi School | Standard 4 Moved to Ward St house |
| 1955 | 11 | Raetihi School | Standard 5 Teacher: Laurie Smith |
| 1956 | 12 | Raetihi School | Standard 6 Dux, Teacher: Des O'Donnell |
| 1957 | 13 | Ruapehu College | 3rd form |
| 1958 | 14 | Ruapehu College | 4th form Scouts |
| 1959 | 15 | Ruapehu College | 5th form Pirates of Penzance, Scouts, Pan-Pacific Jamboree |
| 1960 | 16 | Ruapehu College | 6th form Pipe Band |
| 1961 | 17 | Ruapehu College | Taupo with Mike Gould, 7th form, Dux, Pipe Band |
| 1962 | 18 | Weir House | Roommates: Dick Nightingale, Hugh Wilde.<br>Wellington Post Office Pipe Band |
| 1963 | 19 | Weir House | Roommate: Tawatchai Bhengsri. Briefly taught at Ruapehu College. |
| 1964 | 20 | Flatting, BA completion | Flatmates: Ian Harland, Tony Black, Gavin Bayliss.<br>Went to Thailand at end of 1964 –beginning 1965 with Tawatchai Bhengsri |
| 1965 | 21 | Weir fellow | Warden: Tim Beaglehole<br>MA |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1966 | 22 | Weir deputy warden | Junior lecturer ELI. Went to Sabah, Sarawak (Lai Chaw Ho), Indonesia (Nainggolan family) |
| 1967 | 23 | Flatting, Hay St., Wellington | Boyd Anderson, Miles Fairburn, Fraser Finlayson |
| 1968 | 24 | Jogja, IKIP, Jalan Senopati | PhD research, Colombo Plan teacher IKIP Jogja, taught at SMP in Jalan Senopati for a couple of hours a week. Shared rooms with Roger Long at Kusumobroto dance school.<br>November to Thailand for wedding |
| 1969 | 25 | 32 Whaui St., Wellington | PhD writing |
| 1970 | 26 | 32 Whaui St., Wellington | ELI Bought the land at 35 Warwick Street. |
| 1971 | 27 | 32 Whaui St., Wellington | ELI |
| 1972 | 28 | Indonesia IKIP Jogja | Prahm born Rumah Sakit Bethesda, Jogjakarta. Lived at 17 Jalan Magelang, Jogjakarta, ‘bu Moelono’s house |
| 1973 | 29 | Indonesia IKIP Jogja | |
| 1974 | 30 | Indonesia IKIP Jogja | |
| 1975 | 31 | 35 Warwick St, Wellington | |
| 1976 | 32 | 35 Warwick St, Wellington | |
| 1977 | 33 | 35 Warwick St, Wellington | Left for Thailand November 1977 |
| 1978 | 34 | Thailand | Lived at 110 Pradhipat Road, Saphan Kwai, Bangkok.<br>DTEC. Promoted to senior lecturer |
| 1979 | 35 | Thailand | DTEC |
| 1980 | 36 | NZ | Bought 37 Warwick Street? |
| 1981 | 37 | NZ | |
| 1982 | 38 | NZ | |
| 1983 | 39 | NZ | |
| 1984 | 40 | NZ | |
| 1985 | 41 | NZ, USA, NZ | Ohio University, Athens, Ohio: Fulbright 7 months |
| 1986 | 42 | NZ | |
| 1987 | 43 | NZ | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1988 | 44 | NZ | |
| 1989 | 45 | NZ | |
| 1990 | 46 | Finland, NZ | Abo Akademi |
| 1991 | 47 | | Promoted to Reader |
| 1992 | 48 | | First Japan Distinguished Lecturer (see Japan visits file for detail on dates of subsequent visits to Japan) |
| 1993 | 49 | | |
| 1994 | 50 | NZ, Japan | Start of 12 months in Japan Temple University Japan. Osaka, then Kichijoji, Tokyo. |
| 1995 | 51 | Japan, NZ | Prahm at Defence Headquarters |
| 1996 | 52 | | Japan Rail Pass Aomori, Morioka, Kyushu |
| 1997 | 53 | | Malang Testing project, Visit to Jogja |
| 1998 | 54 | Japan | Six months Japan TUJ. Bay Court, Shibaura. |
| 1999 | 55 | | |
| 2000 | 56 | | Vocab at Australian Linguistics Institute |
| 2001 | 57 | | Personal chair Prahm doing law degree |
| 2002 | 58 | Finland, NZ | Abo Akademi, Rarotonga holiday |
| 2003 | 59 | | |
| 2004 | 60 | | Prahm Tina wedding |
| 2005 | 61 | | |
| 2006 | 62 | | |
| 2007 | 63 | Japan | Four months TUJ |
| 2008 | 64 | | |
| 2009 | 65 | | Retired Took up one year fixed term contract |
| 2010 | 66 | Japan | Five months TUJ, VUW farewell |
| 2011 | 67 | | Extensive reading Congress Nagoya, Mata Neville wedding, Nita Paul China |
| 2012 | 68 | | |
| 2013 | 69 | Japan | Four months TUJ, Vocab@Vic, Sarajevo conference |
| 2014 | 70 | | KC NZ tour |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2015 | 71 | | Ruapehu College 60th, Peter funeral |
| 2016 | 72 | | June. Foreign Service Institute, Virginia talks Aleisha Nipper wedding, Chula course |
| 2017 | 73 | | |
| 2018 | 74 | | |
| 2019 | 75 | | Celebrated 50th wedding anniversary (17 December 2018) |
| 2020 | 76 | NZ covid | |
| 2021 | 77 | NZ | Ohakune shop sold. Cousin's tour |
| 2022 | 78 | NZ | |
| 2023 | 79 | | 55th wedding anniversary, Vocab@Vic |
| 2024 | 80 | | Ashwell reunion |
| 2025 | | | |
| | | | |

Kanitha Nation (nee Roeksbutr)

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1942 | | Nan, Thailand | |
| 1963 | 21 | Thailand | Teaching at Kasetsart University, Thailand to 1966 |
| 1967 | 23 | NZ | Dip TESL at ELI, Victoria University |
| 1968 | 24 | Thailand | Teaching at Kasetsart University, Bangkok. Wedding |
| 1969 | | New Zealand | James Smith, Thai course for army personnel |
| 1970 | | New Zealand | James Smith |
| 1971 | | New Zealand | Phoenix Insurance |
| 1972 | 28 | Indonesia | Prahm born 22 June 1972 Rumah Sakit Bethesda, Jogja |
| 1973 | | Indonesia | |
| 1974 | | Indonesia | |
| 1975 | | New Zealand | |
| 1985 | | USA | Athens, Ohio |
| 1986 | | New Zealand | Began working at National Mutual, Prahm at Wgtn High |
| 1987 | | | National Mutual |
| 1988 | | | National Mutual |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1989 | | | National Mutual |
| 1990 | | Finland, NZ | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| 1994 | 51 | NZ, Japan | 18 May 1994 New Zealand citizen, Ishikiri, Kichijoji |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| 1998 | | NZ, Japan | Bay Court, Tamachi, Shibaura, Tokyo |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

## Appendix 7: Names for the school photos

? = unknown, X = no person in that place in the photo

### Ohakune School 1950 Primer 3

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ronny Williams | Peter Williams | Glen McIntyre | Richard Bishop | ? | Hune Rapana | Bill Taylor | Johnny McLeod | ? | Clinton Bishop | ? | |
| John Palmer | Roland Jones | Gary Adsett | Moeller? | Iramutu Wiari | Jennifer Whale | Glenda Woolett | Beth Howatt | ? | ? | Tommy Rongonui | Paul Nation |
| Molly Young | Dianne Schreiber | Lorraine Young | Pat Wiperi | Judith Gartner | ? | Janice Johansson | ? | ? | ? | ? | |

### Ohakune School 1951 Primer 4/Standard 1

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Paul Nation | Matthew Blackburn | ? | ? | Richard Bishop | Billy Harrison | ? | Donald McIntosh | ? | John Palmer | Bill Tammy Pikere |
| X | X | ? | Beth Howatt | Norma Dunn | Janet Johansson | Glenda Woolett | ? | X | X | X |
| Colleen Sue | Iramutu Wiari | Dianne Schreiber | Robyn Pearce | Terryl Mayes | Judith Gartner | Nicolette Stephens | ? | ? | Pat Wiperi | Molly Young |

## Ohakune School 1952 Standard 2

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| X | Bill Taylor | Hune Rapana | Ian Hemara | Richard Bishop | Denis Wallace | Vernon Split | Murray Hapuka | John McLeod | Ken George | ?Downes | John Palmer | X | X |
| X | Young Lim | Bill Tammy Pikari | Cyril Sue | Donald Goile | Doug Reynolds | Michael Moeller | Rangi Paki | ? | ? | Tommy Rongonui | Donald McIntosh | X | Peter Phippen |
| | Glen McIntyre | Judith Gartner | Judith Mott | Glenda Woolett | Naomi Hapuka | Mabel Thompson | ? | Janice Johansson | Jill OConnell | Coleen Sue | Margaret Reynolds | Alan Dalton | Graham Chamberlain |
| X | Norma Dunn | Pat Wiperi | Dianne Schreiber | Ngaire Falk | Olga Kiff | ?Robin Pearce/ Beth Howatt | ?? *Wilson? | Janet Whale | Ann Rosman | Barbara Hammond | Pamela? McKenzie father in forestry | X | X |

*Brought up by Wilson family in Karioi

## Raetihi School 1954 Standard 4

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| X | Tom Punch | X | Dean Hoddle | Brian Haitana | Billy Williams | Paddy Arahanga | Billy MacDonnell | Billy Edwards | X |
| Allan Garmonsway | Sid Haitana | John Graham? | Mervyn Reynolds | Ray Wiggins | Jimmy MacDonnell | Jimmy Williams | Ronald Billington | Peter Rerekura | Paul Nation |
| Susan Berry | Loretta Peni | Lorraine Taurawera | Myra Te Huia | Cynthia Edmonds | Sharon Frederickson | Loretta Sutherland* | ? | X | X |
| Megan Webb | Janet Haitana | Jackie Harawira | Helen Satherly | ? | Margaret Davis | Zolita (Pixie) Godfrey | Gillian Urwin | Colleen Mosen | X |

**Raetihi Primary School, February 1956, Standard 6**

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| X | Jimmy McDonnell | Dean Hoddle | Billy McDonnell | Ray Wiggins | Noel Clark | John Graham | Allan Garmonsway | Paul Nation | X |
| Sid Haitana | Peter Rerekura | James Creighton | Billy Edwards | Billy Williams | Mervyn Reynolds | Allan Parker | Tom Punch | Ron Billington | Jimmy Scott |
| X | Loretta Sutherland | Susan Berry | Lorraine Taurawera | X | Margaret Davis | Colleen Mosen | Megan Webb | X | Jocelyn Carroll |
| X | Helen Satherley | Zolita (Pixie) Godfrey | Jackie Harawira | Loretta Peni | Cynthia Edmonds | Janet Haitana | Dianne Wilson | Gillian Urwin | X |

Teacher: Des O'Donnell

**Ruapehu College, 1959, Form 5**

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Allan Garmonsway | Ian Hemara | Ian Meredith | Clive Read | Ken George | John Dykes | Brian Eades | Keith Drayton | Teddie Kumeroa | X |
| Leo Cleary | Don Macintosh | David Paranihi | Glenn McIntyre | Janice Johannson | Ann Severs | Keith Peacock | Billy Edwards | John Palmer | Paul Nation |
| Felicity Akapita | Thelma Rongonui | Cynthia Edmonds? | Gillian Urwin | Lenora Awburn | Jackie Mountfort | Jackie Hawira | Janet Rawiri | X | X |

Teacher: Trevor Edmond

**Ruapehu College, 1960, Forms 6A & 6B**

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| X | X | Keith Peacock | John Dive | Ian Meredith | X | X |
| Bill McLea | Brian Eades | Chris Field | *Mike Gould* | *Tom Mowat* | *Ken Kaanga* | Ian Hemara |
| | Don Macintosh | Allan Garmonsway | *Margaret Chan* | *Jean Weir* | *David Paranihi* | Paul Nation |

Italics = 6A

**Ruapehu College prefects, 1961**

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Keith Peacock | Lynette Taylor | Derek Mills? | Jane Mowat | Don Macintosh | X |
| Tony Joyce | Jackie Mountfort | Ian Meredith | Loretta Peni | Paul Nation | Vicki Eden |

**Appendix 8: Jane Dudley's farewell letter to LALS**

Jane Dudley was secretary of the ELI and LALS and a good friend for countless years. She began working at the ELI in 1970.

"Last Friday evening was a wonderful time. I couldn't have asked for a better send-off. I caught up with so many people – not enough, in many cases, as time would permit. I hope to see them again in the future.

I would so like to thank you all for the beautiful bouquet, the very bounteous gift of money in its Japanese folder; the photo of ELI staff circa 1982; and your kind thoughts written on the cards. The flowers will last a week or two; the money I hope a little longer and I'll buy something with it to keep and remind me of you; the cards and photo will jog memories as they begin to fade in the future.

I would like to thank Janet for persuading me to combine the farewell with the annual picnic, and Paul N. for his agreed monosyllabic speech.

I have enjoyed working at the School through three periods of similar length. Firstly, from 1970, with H.V. George as Director of the ELI, in 14 Wai-Te-Ata Road, when almost all the students were from overseas and the staff totalled around 12. At the beginning there I used an Imperial 66 typewriter, which takes more ft lb to do a full day's work than a navvy digging ditches. Then I moved on to the IBM golfball electric typewriters. In those days, to communicate with the Director away from the university meant sending a letter or telegram (as he had no telephone at home). All material handed out to students was printed on the Gestetner machine, 'the sound of the ELI'. I remember Gareth Morgan ringing up to enquire about buying our first little photocopier (one sheet at a time), getting into practice for Trade Me.

In 1983, with Graeme Kennedy in charge, we moved to Von Zedlitz, when the ELI began to grow and establish so many systems, which helped set up the Institute/School as an example to others in the University. In 1984 was the first electronic typewriter, which led to a lot of people getting RSI/OOS. Still, Anna used it successfully for many years in the resource room, with its memory facility. In 1985 the ELI got its first computer - $11,000 it cost! It lived in a little, dark room, where Graeme worked on his corpus linguistics, and I occasionally ventured in. Not until I got a proper workstation did one move into my office. I remember the early screens were in orange on black, and light green on dark green. And you could type faster than the machine could keep up. It must have been in the early 1990s when Debby joined me in the next door office, to look after the EPP side of the job.

Then came the years of the amalgamation of the ELI with the Linguistics Department, forming the School of LALS in 1997, mostly with David Crabbe in the Chair. Thankfully, this happened with no rancour, though with some trepidation on the part of one or two. The School expanded its postgraduate programme, moving from the DipTES(O)L to MA, and adding more thesis students who have given colour and life to the fourth floor and other bolt holes, and by distance. Funny thing with emails: you never know in which country they'll end up.

We have been very lucky that throughout those years the atmosphere has been so harmonious and collegial, to use an academic term. Long may it continue – as I'm sure it will under the leadership of Paul Warren."

## Appendix 9: 37 Warwick Street Roger Walker

# MY FAVOURITE BUILDING

## Wellington architect Roger Walker on a favourite small-house project.

"I was asked if I had any small houses I could be photographed with. That was easy, as I have designed very few large ones. In the 1970s, the Wellington City Council created a subdivision in the suburb of Wilton. One of my clients still lives in his house. Over the years I was commissioned to design two additional detached houses for guests and family members. One house is pointy, another curvy. Five years ago I was asked to add to the curvy one. Because suburbs are so deserving of (and, some say, invite) subversion, the addition is not an extrusion of the original curved cross section, but takes the form of a split monopitch roof intended to wave at the neighbours. This was a friendly, rather than provocative gesture, as the neighbour lives in one of my designs as well. All these houses are deliberately compact, with living and service spaces of appropriate dimensions clipped onto efficient vertical and horizontal circulation routes. Just as the Holden Commodore has been replaced by the Mazda 3 as Australia's best-selling car, house sizes on both sides of the Tasman are headed in the same direction and for similar reasons. Overbuilding is energy inefficient, wasteful of resources and can be socially unfriendly. It's also architecturally easier to make small houses far cuter than big ones." H

PHOTOGRAPHY / *Paul McCredie*

Published in *Home NZ* August/September 2015 Last page

**Index**